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# An Orphanage in Mexico: Four United Nations' Human Rights of Children and Wolins' Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care Through the View of the Manager and Staff

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An Orphanage in Mexico: Four United Nations' Human Rights of Children  
and Wolins' Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care

Through the View of the Manager and Staff

by

Lucía Beatriz Quesnel Galván

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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in  
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## Abstract

In Mexico there are officially 1.8 million orphaned children, without counting non-orphaned children deprived of family, who also need care; of these, only 657,000 are living in 703 orphanages. Mexico's government invests less than 2% of its budget toward protection of children. There is a lack of substantive research or official assessment of orphanages. According to the scant research found, the children's human rights most frequently violated in Mexican orphanages are the rights to nutrition and health care, to be protected from further victimization, to free expression and participation, and to not be exploited. This study was carried out through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the manager and five staff members of a respected orphanage in Mexico. It aimed to determine how they attempt to fulfill the aforementioned rights, and how their work relates to six prerequisites for efficient group-care formulated by Wolins after his vast research on the matter. Results indicate that the staff members of this orphanage view their work as spirituality in action, becoming the children's family, caring for their health through special vegetarian nutrition. They teach the children that they are the masters of their own lives and happiness, and not to see themselves as victims. From results I also suggest: well supervised facilities, coupling between staff and professionals to screen children's health; a vegetarian diet based on scientific research; children's participation in rules, learning about, from and for their human rights and the idea of children being masters of their life and happiness.

## Dedication

To my dear sister Alma Quesnel, who grew up in a group-care institution, always my supportive angel.

To Stephanie Thornley, who grew up in foster care, and is my soul mate.

To all the boys and girls who are living in orphanages. May this piece be of use to defend their human rights, and their right to hope and happiness.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

“For the rest of his life, Oliver Twist remembers a single word of blessing spoken to him by another child because this word stood out so strikingly from the consistent discouragement around him.”

— Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

This research was conceived facing the well-known scene of disgraceful settings for child group care, where legendary child maltreatment pictured in novels and cinema has been haunting and embarrassing societies.

The purpose of this study was to learn from an orphanage that seems to be achieving a successful protection of children deprived of their family in Mexico. Through the views and reported experience of the manager and five staff members of this orphanage, I explored two main subjects related to the caring of children in the institution: First, four human rights of the children, selected from the United Nations’ International Convention on the Rights of the Child; and second, the prerequisites that are necessary for efficient group care, according to Wolins (1974), who formulated them after his research on group care institutions in eight countries, including the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Israel Kibbutz.

### **Introduction**

In this general introduction to this research, I first give a background of the study, as the basis to state the research problem. Then, I explain the significance of the problem, and afterwards I present the methods and the definitions of the key concepts used in the research.

To understand the current situation of orphanages, I now present some historical background.

### **Background of the Problem**

After the Second World War, due to needs of the labor force in the U.S., and lack of opportunities in Mexico, rural laborers began migrating from Mexico to the United States. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were around one million people crossing the border annually, disrupting the traditional Mexican family structure (Tuirán, 2000). Countless peasant children have been left with elders or ended up working. In Mexico, 27% of agricultural day laborers are ages 5-14 (Rojas, 2006). In year 2013, the official report was that 33.5 million (28% of total population) are children, and 1.3 million of these children are in labor force, of which 28% is 14 years old or younger (CONAPO, 2014 ). Children who are left behind in rural areas are exposed to malnutrition, stress from exploitation, sunburn, snakebites, pesticides, injury, maltreatment, and even death (Mull, 2002; Rojas, 2006). Many of these children are orphaned or deprived of their family. Recruitment for drug-dealing, organ, and sexual commerce pose additional risks (Azaola, 2004, Figa, 1994).

Due to the current financial crisis in the United States, many immigrants are returning to reunite with their families, putting more stress on the Mexican economy where there is less employment and more poverty. There is great uncertainty of what the outcome will be. For example, in 2008, 17,772 minors who were on their own, mostly boys, were deported from the United States: 94% between the ages 12 to 17, 4% between

ages 6 to 11, and 2% five years or younger. Most of these children had crossed the border looking for jobs, and only 20% were trying to reunite with their parents (Otero, 2009).

Worse still, in recent years the so-called “war on narco” and its concomitant violence, has yielded over 50, 000 more orphans and homeless children. They are the children of drug-dealers, policemen, soldiers, owners of small business, journalists, small town politicians, workers and peasants who have been killed, disabled, imprisoned, kidnapped or disappeared (Valdéz, 2015).

Thus, a major challenge to Mexico is the number of children deprived of their family and concomitant lack of orphanages or shelters to care for them. Of the official number of 1.8 million orphans in Mexico, without counting other children deprived of family, only 657,000 live in 753 orphanages and only 29,000 live in governmental shelters (Gaceta Parlamentaria, 2014). Many orphans live with relatives, but orphanages take many children deprived of their family as a result of migration, abandonment, running away escaping maltreatment, abuse or exploitation, or having been taken away by the DIF<sup>1</sup> (National Welfare Agency) for any of the mentioned reasons.

The vast majority of Mexican orphanages are notoriously inadequate (Muñozcano, 2001). I personally visited some orphanages that are considered adequate by the local authorities. None of these provide children with an environment that fulfills their basic rights. The exceptions are a few well known orphanages like the *SOS Villages* (SOS Villages Mexico, 2006), and *Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos* (Our Little Siblings) (2006) that are internationally financed. In these orphanages, there is good nutrition and

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(1) DIF is the acronym for *Sistema de Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (System for Integral Development of Family) which is the National Welfare Agency of Mexico.

health care, and children are not exploited. However, for example, even in those settings, I did not see the children participate actively in decision-making. That means their voice is not heard nor did they allow the children to live and learn their right to free expression and participation. A number of authors (Bowen, 1962; Korczac, 1958/2006; Makarenko, 1938/1954; Stafford, Laybourne, Walker, & Hill, 2003; Reddy& Ratna, 2002) have mentioned the right and need of children to have freedom of expression and a democratic environment. Other international researchers have found that when the children's voices are respected within an institution, there is an important improvement of the services (Ackerman, Feeney, Hart, & Newman, 2003; Hart, 1992).

The research problem of this study consisted of finding how a respected orphanage honors children deprived of their family and how its organization, management and educational philosophy support or do not support such purpose. The central point was to study how the orphanage fulfills four basic human rights of the children that I selected from the International Convention on the Rights of the Child for this research (see Appendix A). Also how the six prerequisites for efficient group care formulated by Wolins (1974) are related to the efficiency of the orphanage.

In the first place, I pursued to find an orphanage in Mexico that worked in a manner that seemed to offer the children a closer possibility of fulfilling their human rights, and provided efficient group care. After visiting and researching on different possibilities, I found an orphanage that is settled in a poor area of a mid-southern state of Mexico. This orphanage has a reputation in the community as being well organized and respectful of children's rights.



This paper is a study on how the aforementioned orphanage is organized according to the view of the manager and five staff personnel. Also, how they describe the children's life as well as their own work in the orphanage in order to fulfill the four selected human rights of the children and the prerequisites of Wolins (1974) for efficient group care.

### **Significance of the Research Problem**

Why did I decide to study group care of children deprived of their family? In the sections below, I explain my professional and personal interests as well as the relevance of the study in the context of Mexico, justifying why it is important to study group care of children deprived of their family in this country.

### **Professional Interest**

As an intervention to the aforementioned problem, my ultimate aim is to collaborate with a community of children deprived of their family in Mexico and help this resulting organization become a prototype for a democratic community, where the children's human rights are fulfilled. To be able to do this in the future, I studied an institution that already exists, concentrating on their organizational setup, management, and general administration. Through this case study, I examined how the four selected human rights of the child and the six prerequisites for efficient group care are fulfilled in this institution.

I present a full rationale of my criteria to select these rights later when I discuss the key terms for this research.

From now on, I refer to the following rights as the selected human rights of the child. Next are the rights I selected:

First right: The right to adequate nutrition and health care.

Second right: The right to be protected from recurrent victimization.

Third right: The right to free expression and participation in decisions that affect their life.

Fourth right: The right to not be exploited (United Nations 1989; see also Appendix A and Appendix B).

Given all the problems that orphanages seem to confront, I seek to understand how a successful orphanage with unique characteristics performs, seen through the view of their staff and manager.

### **Personal Interest**

In the 35 years of my career, I have studied and practiced in different areas such as pedagogical methods, psychology, child therapy, and the promotion and defense of the human rights of the child. All of these themes are my passion, but now, my aim was to learn about something that I had not experienced: The problems and drawbacks that a real orphanage has had, meeting the prerequisites to obtain an effective practice and fulfilling the selected human rights of the child.

### **Relevance of the Study (Validation of the Problem)**

One reason why this research is important is that care for the children deprived of family in Mexico has had scarce attention. Muñozcano (2001) recognized that the care for children deprived of their family has been remarkably understudied in Mexico.

Muñozcano (2005) is the Mexican chairperson for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on Human Rights of the Child (UNESCO) and has collaborated with the Alternative Report for the United Nations Organization's Committee for Human Rights of the Child, which deals with legal and political problems regarding facilities for children deprived of their family.

The second reason to study this subject is a need for more information about how orphanages are acting before the laws and policies, written after the signing of the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child. By signing this Convention in 1990, the Mexican government agreed to develop and lay stress upon the defense of the human rights of the child. This has been relevant to promote laws and policies that protect the children (Colectivo Mexicano de Apoyo a la Niñez, 1996). To fulfill these rights means to follow up with the enforcement of laws and efforts that have been derived from that event. It is, therefore, important to see how an orphanage manager and staff members view these rights and are able to act on them in their own setting. This is why I have focused on the problem of how four selected basic human rights of the children are being fulfilled through the perspective of the administration of an orphanage in Mexico.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The research problem consists on understanding the view of the participants who are the staff of the selected orphanage, in order to explain their opportunities and challenges to build the orphanage, and how their ideas and self-reported practices support or obstruct the fulfillment of four selected human rights of the child and the six prerequisites formulated by Wolins (1974) to reach an efficient group care.

### **Significance of the Research Problem**

The educational significance of this problem is important mainly because it has not been previously studied and the practice of orphanages needs further understanding.

The information on institutions for children deprived of their family is predominantly derived from fund-raising publicity for private institutions, which are, for the most part, administered by religious groups (Educa, 2006). The most detailed documents provided uncritical histories, services, and principles of operation of two institutions affiliated with international organizations: *Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos* (Our Little Siblings) (2006); with branches in other nine Latin American countries, and the SOS Villages (SOS Villages Mexico, 2006) with headquarters in Austria and branches in 137 countries. Yet, this information is scant, provided by the institutions themselves, and does not give the specific details that relate to the rights of the child.

Among other missing investigations in the literature, is a thorough study of how an orphanage works in Mexico in particular reference to the rights of the child.

### **Presentation of Method and Research Questions**

This research was a qualitative case study of an orphanage in Mexico, referring to its complexity through the view of the manager and five staff members, regarding the following research questions:

Research question 1. How do participants of this orphanage view their work?

Research question 2. Based on the participants' expressed opinions, what were the organizational challenges and opportunities when setting up and now administering this institution?

Research question 3. What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding the four selected human rights of the child?

3.1 What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding nutrition and health care?

3.2 What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding treatment for previous victimization and protection from further abuse?

3.3 What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding free expression and participation of the children?

3.4 What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding child responsibilities, work, and exploitation?

Research question 4. What characteristics can the participants of this orphanage identify in their practice within Wolins' prerequisites for efficient group care to achieve best practice? What prerequisites could be added to those?

Now I present the key concepts used in this research:

### **Definitions of Key Concepts**

The key concepts are the following: children deprived of their family, orphanage, selected human rights of the child, and prerequisites for efficient group care. I define them as follows.

#### **Children Deprived of Their Family**

A child is defined as a minor who is less than 18 years of age. The children who are institutionalized either in orphanages or governmental shelters, were also called “niños en situación especial” (*children in special situation*) by the National Mexican Welfare Agency (System of Integral Development of the Family, DIF). Now this name has changed to “*niños en circunstancias especialmente difíciles*” (children in especially difficult circumstances). All of the institutionalized children were in this category before

they entered the institution. These circumstances, beside orphans, include children who have been abandoned, or are runaways from their families; children who are living in the street; children involved in law transgression; working minors under exploitation; children of parents who have immigrated or who have been deported from the United States and their family is not with them; children who have been victims of maltreatment, sexual abuse, and/or of family violence; indigenous displaced children; disabled children who are not attended; children who were previously called “drug dependent”—now considered as “in need of a healthy life” —; children who have conflict with law; children who are refugees or displaced from their villages due to social, political conflict, or war in Mexico or immigrants from other countries; children victims of disasters or collective emergencies; children victims of sexual commerce; children who have been kidnapped, and children whose mother or primary care-giver is in jail (Muñozcano, 2004). The children in this orphanage are specifically children deprived of their family. Even if officially named *children in especially difficult circumstances*, I call them children deprived of their family because that is the name that the International Social Services and International Reference Centre for the Rights of Children Deprived of Their Family (2006) have adopted.

### **Orphanage**

In this case, I delimited the assignation of orphanage to an institution dedicated to giving a home to children deprived of their family in a rural area in Southern Mexico. I studied its organization, understood as the model of supervision, coordination of actions, and administration of the orphanage I researched.

I am taking Morin (2008) and the complexity perspective (Morin, 2008; Senge, 2003; Tyler, 1988), because I have included as many foci as needed to understand the complex phenomena that an orphanage entails. Further explanation on this perspective is presented later, in Chapter Two.

### **Selected Human Rights of the Child**

I will first give a rationale of my criteria to select the four specific human rights of the child and afterwards I present the rights I have selected.

**Criteria for the selection of the four human rights of the child for this research.** The rights of the child were declared in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and signed by the Mexican government in 1990 (see Appendix B). In this Convention there are articles defining what is a child, in order for governments to take steps in protecting children, and describing rights like their right to life, to no discrimination, the right to name and nationality, the right to information, to assistance from the state to their parents, and other rights that either do not apply for this case, like the rights of refugee children, or children in an armed conflict; or rights that cannot be covered in a piece of research with the limitations of this one, such as the right to reunify with parents, and the right to parental guidance or to be protected against kidnapping. The right to education could have been added but a lot more questions and interventions would have been necessary. However, this research did find important educational issues that are mentioned later in Chapters Four and Five.

I have selected four human rights of the child that are relevant to my study, also under the criteria that they are the ones that have been more violated in group-care

institutions according to research (A Child's Best Start, 2016; Muñozcano, 2004; Nájjar, 2016; RELAF, 2011). Thus, I consider these human rights to be at the greatest risk and the hardest to fulfill for these vulnerable children who live in an institution.

This is why I selected four basic human rights to watch through this research, which are the following:

**First right.** The right to adequate nutrition and to health care. Contemplated in articles 23, 24 and 25 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (ICRC).

**Second right.** The right to be protected from recurrent victimization. 19, 20 and 26 of the Contemplated in articles of the ICRC.

**Third right.** The right to free expression and participation . Contemplated in articles 12, 13,14 and 15 of the ICRC.

**Fourth right.** The right to not be exploited. Contemplated in articles 31, 32, 34, 36, and 39 of the ICRC.

These aforementioned key articles can be seen in detail in Appendix A.

The reason to select these specific rights is that according to previous research (Kinnear, 2007; Martínez, 2010; Muñozcano, 2006; RELAF, 2011) the aforementioned rights of the child are the most commonly violated in group-care institutions in Mexico.

### **Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care**

The list of prerequisites was formulated by Wolins (1974) after he researched on group care institutions, such as orphanages and other type of group care, through eight world countries:



Given the complexity (Morin, 2008) that any group care entails it is easy to waste energetic, human and other type of resources in trying to have a better organization. This is why it is important to refer to the concept of efficiency: The balance between efforts that staff and managers invest and the results they accomplish is the result of an efficient group care.

The first idea that Wolins (1974) determined is that all efficient group care endeavors have a clear value system, which is the first prerequisite.

In most institutions that care for children, staff is unstable because it is difficult for them to commit, which has strong repercussions in the attachment possibilities of the children and their primary care giver (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Shireman 2003). This is why a second prerequisite for efficient group care is the commitment of the staff.

For the sake of the emotional stability that these children need, predictability regarding rules, places, people and routines is also important. The third prerequisite of Wolins' (1974) list refers to predictability for all involved. Predictability will diminish conflicts due to unexpected changes.

Against the common isolation of children in group care, Wolins (1974) suggested that the setting is well-integrated in the community that surrounds it in order for children to be exposed to different realities and have other peers to exchange games and life experiences. Integration with the surrounding community is Wolins' fourth prerequisite.

Peer group influence can entail dangers, pressure for negative behaviors, deterioration of self-esteem and other problems; thus it is important to watch that this influence is healthy, especially when peers are a most important agent of socialization,

and peer group may carry a child from gloom to glory (Bronfenbrenner, 1971). Its influence is so that often adults are unable to act as a balance. Healthy peer influence is the fifth prerequisite in this list.

The sixth prerequisite of Wolins' list is thought around the activities that can develop the best characteristics for children to develop for their better life as adults, such as participations in useful activities and a strong character, which compose Wolins' (1974) sixth prerequisite. Here is the full list:

First prerequisite: A clear value system

Second prerequisite: A committed staff

Third prerequisite: A sense of predictability for all involved, including the children

Fourth prerequisite: A setting that is integrated with the community

Fifth prerequisite: A healthy influence from the peer group upon the children

Sixth prerequisite: A socially constructive engagement of children and their participation in useful activities that help develop a sense of competence and ownership, a strong character, and a unique personal identity.

In the next chapter I present the literature review as reference for this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

In this Chapter I first give a general theoretical frame addressing the organizational theory to study the orphanage, and the psychological theories to approach possible problems of children deprived of their family, as well as the theories about moral and social development of children as basis to teach and learn about their human rights

After the theoretical frame I report on the literature about care for children deprived of their family worldwide. First, this literature review tells us that group childcare is a worldwide challenge that is addressed in a variety of ways. Secondly, I review programs for children deprived of their family in the United States. In the third place, I describe the situation of care, laws, and protection for children deprived of their family in Mexico.

The purpose of this study was to learn from an orphanage that seems to be achieving a successful protection of children deprived of their family in Mexico. Through the views and reported experience of the manager and five staff members of this orphanage, I explored two main subjects related to the caring of children in the institution: First, four human rights of the children, selected from the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child; and second, delving into Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care together with the participants.

Next, I discuss a theoretical framework for this research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this section, I present the general frame of Morin's (2008) paradigm of complexity regarding organizational theory in relation to orphanages. Morin's frame for organizational complexity works well in helping us understand the multiple forces that affect the organization of orphanages in Mexico. Then I discuss the prerequisites for efficient group care, formulated by Wolins (1974). Wolins' outline of criteria for efficient group care for children may set a standard by which to judge the adequacy of care in Mexican orphanages. I also address theories of child development in the psychological and social sphere, specifically moral development in relation to education on human rights for children deprived of their family. At the end of the section, I give the references for normal physical development, in particular for Mexican children. The last section of the theoretical framework presents child development theories that help us explore the optimal conditions for not only moral development, but also the psychological and social development of children. All three of these theoretical perspectives helped me develop my instruments in order to understand the context and the potential impact of that context on the children in the orphanage.

### **Organizational Theory to Study an Orphanage**

Starting an organization in a poor environment is certainly very chaotic. Usually without a proper budget, one must confront corruption, unpredictable everyday small events, and unforeseeable political, social, and economic events. The struggle to overcome all this is harder and more uncertain than anyone can imagine in the U.S. From my experience in Mexico, I would say that the first step organizers must take is

heightening their threshold of frustration. Probably this is why the theory of Morin (2008) has been so appealing to me.

Outside of the United States, scholars have described two different perspectives (Morin, 2008; Tyler, 1988). One is based on *simplicity*, where organizations are seen as functioning in a way that may be observed and described. From this “paradigm,” as Morin (2008) called it, order is demanded and appreciated. Disorganizing, chaotic or ambiguous facts are disregarded or discarded.

The other “paradigm” Morin (2008) viewed was that of *complexity*. This paradigm has the purpose of understanding all elements and all relations that work within an organization without avoiding any disorganizing, chaotic or ambiguous facts when they are not explained or understood. This is obviously an impossible task. However, it is pursued when research is done from Morin’s perspective. Examples of these elements could be the unconscious mind of those involved, the environmental demands, the external political context, the particular history of the organization in the process of social history, and so forth. The interrelations between all these elements, or others that may appear, are relevant to study a phenomenon. For Morin, now considered the “father of the paradigm of complexity”, the seeking of knowledge cannot be divided and limited, as it has until now, without falling into a new kind of ignorance.

In the approach of an object of study, a researcher must have a dual relationship (Morin, 2008). The first is with him or herself in a subjective relationship. The researcher should never forget that he or she is part of the object of study, so subjectivity is also

present in relation to the object. There is a relationship with the object as something external though it is always linked to the researcher.

Some perspectives on how to understand organizations in the United States focus more on an outcome model. Bolman and Deal (2002) discussed the best examples of that way of thinking. The models they describe derive from capitalism where the end point is efficiency and profit for the company. This is far too simplistic a perspective to understand the organizational dynamics present in an orphanage in Mexico.

Also in the United States, Senge (2003) presented an alternative to Bolman and Deal (2002) and has some of the elements of Morin's perspective on organizations. He has also postulated that an organization must take into account all the elements and processes in it. Senge pointed out the importance of the satisfaction of the people who are involved as part of the process of an organization. This idea coincides with Brown and Yoshioka's (2003) approach in reference to commitment of the staff of the organization, which is of great importance to an orphanage.

From the standpoint of Senge (2003), organizations will function well if they are "learning organizations". An orphanage can also be a learning organization, and it must show its capability to learn and adapt to change. Senge stated that systemic thinking is the fifth discipline, which makes the other "disciplines" of a learning organization work together for a coherent theory and practice. The other disciplines are: personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. These would oppose the "learning disabilities" that may take an organization to failure, in the traditional authoritarian way. Practicing these disciplines may bring effective change with the least

effort. In this way, organizations can find out how they influence and create problems or the solutions to those problems by changing their position. Organizers can move from each event, not expecting the problem to be “out there,” but noticing small quantitative changes and how they become qualitative in the long run. Senge also warned us about linear thinking and how it may prevent us from noticing the dynamic complexity.

Whether the orphanage I studied was a learning organization (Senge, 2003) was something I was able to determine only to a certain point, because the only source of information were the interviews with the manager and staff. Due to the positive outcomes that Senge outlined for non-hierarchical organizations, it was important to watch for elements of democracy in the orphanage. These are also echoed in the opportunities for democracy for the children, as seen in this study.

However, Senge (2003) did not clearly focus on the historical reality, which Morin (2008) has taken into account. The relevance of this reality is evident in the modern context within both Mexico and the United States. Financial breakdown changes the needs and enhances the everyday personal problems of those involved in a research as well as in an evolving organization. It brings obstacles to the organization and a new tension to relationships that seemed manageable before. As a result, current Mexican official budgets have been cut for social welfare (Muñozcano, 2005) as they have in the United States. In Mexico, however, there was never enough funding; therefore most orphanages have always survived from public charity (Colectivo Mexicano de Apoyo a la Niñez [Mexican Collectivity for the Support of Children; COMEXANI], 1996). Disposition to change or conserve a model is an interesting feature to observe in an

orphanage. Some elements may honor a specific model based on a clear objective. For example “[preventive] measures to avoid that the children suffer further disturbances than those they already had in their upbringing” (Payne & White, 1979, p. 70) (this is what the second selected human right of the child for this study is about.) However, some organizations find it difficult to change a model they have already established.

Morin used systems theory but warned us not to fall into reductive operations as when dealing with cybernetics, which also comes from systems theory. Morin (2008) pointed out some of the virtues of systems theory. First, is the fact that it recognizes that the whole is not the sum of the parts. Thus, an orphanage is not the sum of staff, manager, children, logistics, and infrastructure but it is the dynamic interaction among them. Systems theory does not pretend to exist in reality, but as a formality in thought and as an uncertain notion. The scope of systems theory is trans-disciplinary and it allows all similarities and differences of each discipline to be included. My preference for this perspective is enhanced as I viewed many facets: political and social context, budget, fund raising, hierarchy, pursuit of democratic practices if any, organization of health and educational resources in the orphanage, and so forth. All these facets were seen through the selected human rights of the child.

Morin (2008) also invited us to be aware of how thoughts are organized. When control of knowledge is out of the hands of those who produce it this gives way to *blindness* (Morin, 2008). Complex thought cannot avoid ambiguity, uncertainty, and disorganization. This is something that may appear in the responses of the participants and my observations of the orphanage. These three results of complex thought appear



linked to feelings of confusion, anxiety or misunderstanding, more than *evidence*, which is expected from a paradigm of simplicity. This is why a fairly well functioning orphanage in a country like Mexico was easier to approach if I could accept the anxiety that ambiguity, uncertainty, and disorganization may bring instead of trying to avoid the complexity of such reality. This is how Morin's theoretical viewpoint fits well in this study.

From the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is research on the interactions among the different elements in an organization. Both Tyler (1988) and Weick (1976) described how "well coupled" those elements should be. Administrative and academic activities in an educational institution are not always tightly coupled and this leads to miscommunication and inefficiency (Fussarelli, 2002). When administration and teaching are "loosely coupled" obstacles arise: budget for materials is not ready, technological access is denied, proper books are unavailable, teachers are not on time for meetings, and so forth. This can be observed within the orphanage I researched. The coupling to watch in an orphanage is related to the requirements for better communication and conditions for the children, as well as efficient functioning, and better use of limited resources. What would these better conditions for the children look like? In order to answer this question I now enter in a deeper discussion of the prerequisites for efficient group care of children deprived of family.

### **Theories on Efficient Group Care**

The provisional principles to be observed during the institutionalization of a child recommended by the International Social Services and International Reference Centre for

the Rights of Children Deprived of Their Family (2006) are often used as a basic reference to evaluate institutions that are transitory for the children. Other documents help evaluate more permanent services, such as Ceglowski's (2004) *Assessing Structural Indicators of Child Care Quality at the Local Level: Lessons From Four Minnesota Counties*. Much discussion deals with techniques to evaluate service quality (Ceglowski, 2004; McKenzie, 2006; Zmora, 1994).

It seems easy to design indicators and set benchmarks, but these do not immediately result in measures to assess a group situation involving children, as might be expected during interviews that allowed an observation period of a few months. A more qualitative research approach, where I can describe and explain the constraints of real practice, is then appropriate (University of Minnesota Center of Early Education and Development, 2001). To determine the factors that influence quality is on what Ceglowski (2004) has mainly worked. Most assessments have focused on physical environment, staff characteristics, classroom composition, and curriculum and program philosophy. Studies recommend different measures in the social and emotional sphere for these types of organizations. On one level, authors recommend the evaluation of the quality of interpersonal relations and standards with regard to the staff's passion and commitment (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Bueno & Rosser, 2002).

On another level, the focus is the quality of the attention to the children, as well as the creation of spaces in which their adequate development, with full respect of their personalities and human rights, is valued (Innocenti Research Centre, 2003). These parameters for observation are an important reference, even though the evaluators deal

with problems of an advanced nature compared to the context of a poorer country like Mexico. In all world countries, however, other aspects are relevant, such as the participation of the children to help the growth of democracy. This is what I discuss in the following section.

**Wolins' research and prerequisites for efficient group care.** Wolins (1974) invited different scholars to write about their approaches to group care for his edited book *Successful Group Care*. They reflected on history, ideology, politics, and other relevant frames such as the importance of the legitimacy of orphanages. From these studies, Wolins established substantial characteristics for effective intervention in group care for children deprived of their family. He was able to point out some dangers of growing up in group settings, like isolation, crowded living conditions, and unconditional submission to authoritarian management. He postulated:

An asylum is a first-rate place for imitating sickness and having incapable behavior reinforced by inmates and staff. It is a place the healthy avoid for fear of contagion, defamation, or abuse. It is a place where low levels of expectation produce low levels of functioning, which are the justification for low expectations. (p. 32).

As said before isolation of children in group care, Wolins (1974) is common. That is why Wolins stressed on the point of relating the placement with the community that surrounds so children may be able to live experiences other than those within the orphanage and have diverse peers to learn from. For the sake of legitimacy in the community, Wolins proposed useful activities that help children develop a sense of competence and ownership to engage them in a socially constructive way.

As other authors mentioned before like Ackerman, et. al., (2003); Reddy & Ratna, (2002), and Wolins (1974) attached great importance to democracy and participation of the children as he considered peer group influence to be an important substitute for parental guidance. For this, Wolins recounted different experiences (such as those of Korczak and Makarenko) where a value system that is clear to all in the setting is above personal authorities. This allows children to suggest rules and for staff to commit to these rules, even if a director still is the major coordinator of the facility. All this will enforce a better sense of predictability for all in the community.

Wolins' (1974) approaches took into account needs, inmates, staff, rules, evaluation, social requirements, relationships, dangers, and their "antidotes" (p. 20), peer functioning, and societal intrusion. From these approaches, Wolins was able to come up with certain prerequisites that may help orient appropriate group care functioning. I decided to take Wolins' prerequisites for efficient group care as a previous reference because it coincides and confirms other authors' conclusions (Bowen, 1962; McKenzie, 1999; Payne & White, 1979; Zmora, 1994). The following are Wolins' prerequisites for efficient group care for children deprived of their family, as I refer to them through this research:

A clear value system.

A committed staff.

A sense of predictability for all involved, including the children.

A setting that is integrated with the community.

A healthy influence from the peer group upon the children.

A socially constructive engagement of children and their participation in useful activities that help them develop a sense of competence and ownership, a strong character, and a unique personal identity.

To understand the deep personal emotional problems that children bring when they have been deprived from their family, it is essential to refer to theories related to this condition. This is what I approach in the following section.

### **Theories of the Psychological and Social Development of the Child**

I will first present the psychological development theories. Then I will proceed to write about theories of social development.

**Psychological theories.** In relation to the human rights of the child, I will mention three theories: Lebovici's mandate theory, attachment theory, and theory of resilience.

***Lebovici's mandate theory.*** According to the theory of parenthood of Lebovici (1981) there are two general profiles that may describe children deprived of their family. The first is that of children who were originally unwanted and thus were maltreated, abused, or exposed to other forms of neglect: some were abandoned; others became runaways or were left on their own. These children are traumatized and have serious attachment disturbances. They bear a burden that this author calls a "tanatic mandate" (mandate of death) which constantly takes them to depression, self-denial and destruction. To work with them is difficult and requires constant attention especially in the fortifying of the social net surrounding the child. This is part of the treatment usually recommended for traumatized children (Kagan, 2004). Other children deprived of their family were originally wanted by their parents but experienced a tragic event: the death

or disability of a parent or caregiver; an unwanted separation by incarceration, illness or any other circumstance; or they suffered extreme poverty and could not receive proper parenting. These children, despite their unfortunate experience, have a mandate for life. Thus, they are stronger and better able to overcome hardships. Working with them is easier for the staff at care-giving institutions. Their prognosis is generally positive even when therapeutic support is not available (Lebovici, 1981).

***Attachment theory.*** Attachment theory, expounded by Bowlby (1969) in the United States, maintains that children develop different types of relationships depending on the kind of attachments they built during their first two years of life. In 1951, Bowlby studied the distress that was experienced by children who were separated from their parents, a behavioral response common in mammals in such situations. If the parent figure is available and loving, the child will have a secure confident response to other relationships. Bowlby (1969) described the consequences of deprivation on children who were raised without maternal care. Although it was demonstrated that effects of separation in these children were confounded with the effects of sensorial deprivation (Shireman, 2003), Bowlby's work (1969) as well as that of researchers that followed, has shown the relevance of permanency for children and its impact in their lives. Difficulties or the impossibility of making new attachments and trusting adults may come from different kinds of attachment traumas (Shireman, 2003). Three types of attachment problems may be useful to distinguish: Those that stem from a traumatic experience, those that stem from interrupted relationships (such as those that come from repeated

foster care placements), and those that stem from profound neglect (Bourguignon & Watson, 1987).

Other authors have further proposed that children who have been separated from their parents and then adopted or institutionalized need to know the whole story of their lives and elaborate on the traumatic aspects of the experience (Kagan, 2004; O'Malley, 2000). Children who have felt rejected or have suffered previous abuse will exhibit attachment disorders. Such disorders may show up as aggression and destructiveness of themselves or of external objects, be their human relations, pets, objects, or environmental surroundings. Other behaviors include anxiety, resistance, or reluctance to establish relationships (Fraley, 2013). When institutionalized, one of the greater challenges for caregivers is to rebuild the attachments children have lost. It takes a lengthy careful dedication to establish a stable social net to give each child an emotionally secure environment to rebuild attachments (Kagan, 2004).

Children whose caregiver is responsive establish close confident relationships. Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974), in her “strange situation” experiment (2) She found three types of attachments: Secure (seeking comfort from mother), insecure anxious/avoidant (not distressed when mother leaves and avoiding when she returns), and insecure resistant (not comforted for a long time after mother returns). Early face-to-face

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2 The experiment consists on watching how a child around one year of age plays with his mother; then she leaves the room for a few minutes, creating stress on the child and a stranger tries to console the child; then the mother returns. According to the child's reaction when the mother returns, the authors established these three types of attachments.

eye contact, kind, amicable, attentive attachments will enhance the desire to be close to people, and will result in normal anxiety when temporary separations have to occur.

When depending on the care of adults who are not parents when adopted, but more so when depending on a child care organization, each child needs to feel that the institution is a safe haven, offers a secure space to explore possibilities of separation and different experiences within the surroundings. A new family experience must be trustworthy. This trust is constructed from trustworthy stories (O'Malley, 2000) of the child's life, and games or artwork activities that allow symbolism to take the place of earlier traumatic and painful experiences (Kagan, 2004).

***Theory of resilience.*** Cyrulnik, (2009) based on Bowlby (1969) developed the concept of resilience by remembering how his own past as an orphan was overcome, after his parents were killed in the World war II holocaust. It is a term taken from the bending of physical materials that after being forced out of shape return to their original one. Resilience is then applied to understanding how a person may be stressed away from a normal situation but still can return to the original strength in spite of sometimes extreme suffering or distress. This theory is helpful in order to understand the possibilities of children to recover when they have been neglected, or abused, but above all, like Cyrulnik, children who have been tragically orphaned. Furthermore, Guenard (2003) is an author who after a distressful history of violence and maltreatment gives his moving testimony to sustain the theory of resilience in his book about how he was able to forgive and stop hatred.



**Theories about social development.** To go further in the protection of the selected human rights of the child, it is important to understand the theories on social and moral development of the child and the literature on the teaching and learning of human rights. This is what I approach next.

***Learning human rights.*** For previously exploited children, or children who have been abused, it is somehow more complex to learn about their own human rights than pursuing other kinds of learning. According to Limpens and Murrieta (2000) and Cascón (1985), we can teach previously victimized children *about*, *for* and *from* human rights: *About* human rights as basic information; *for* human rights as they learn to become the defenders of these rights for other children; and *from* the practice of the reinforcement of human rights by the stakeholders in the everyday life. There is a need for a deeper learning, and it has to do with the cognitive and emotional process that changes the perspective of the self (Limpens & Murrieta, 2000). The child learns in a social context, but those social circumstances are framed in an economic and historical reality (Vygotsky, 1978), and this has an impact in the everyday life of each child in a different manner. For example is at this time in Mexico, as in other third world countries, where exploitation of child labor exists. This impacts working children differently than middle class children.

First, the contents of the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of the Child must to be assimilated, and the child would have to make the appropriate accommodations according to his or her previous schemes in order to understand each concept (Piaget & Indeheler, 1959/2000). Thus, the learning child must build the

concepts of law, right, demand and enforcement. Facilitating this for children can be accomplished by showing them the necessity of laws to regulate human relations through games (Cascón, 1985; Limpens & Murrieta, 2000). Another way to teach these concepts is to present moral dilemmas for children to resolve, and then formulate pertinent questions to discuss the outcomes with them (Kohlberg, 1985; Piaget, 1932/1962). The process of assimilation depends on the stage of cognitive development the child is going through. Accommodations are the changes the child will make, for example, the way a dilemma is solved to give a new explanation of the righteousness of the outcome.

After this, there is a need for deeper understanding, and it is related to a profound psychological process and the unconscious (Freud, 1923/1976; Klein, 1937/1985). This process implies other concepts, such as Freud's super-ego, which would be developed through the symbolization of feelings of guilt and reparation (Klein, 1937/1985) and building limits from the unconscious, mainly through free symbolic make-believe play (Klein, 1937/1985).

In terms of learning, the traumatized child is also unlearning a previous self-image and learning about the extraordinarily powerful survivor in him or her and about the ways in which she or he indeed owns the world instead of being its pariah. This is where the concept of self-esteem (Branden, 1995) becomes useful.

Depending on the degree of victimization, learning about human rights implies different teaching and environmental needs. The first right (regarding adequate nutrition) is one of the basic ones; if the child has eaten only tortillas and beans most of his or her life, to learn this right implies issues related to body image, emotion, cognition and

behavior at the same time. In the case of the third right (to be free expression and participation in decisions that affect his or her life), children have gone through different degrees of humiliation or disrespect, and to learn about this right will require becoming a member of a just community (Kohlberg, 1985).

It may be somehow easier for children to perform this defense of their human rights when she or he is empowered by other adults who are able to recognize the child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) and is able to propose a change from an unfair situation to a fair one. There is a need to feel that the other person, adult or child is not superior, but neither is to be "put down" to an inferior position. Perhaps the other person, when acting arrogant or humiliating has to be seen as temporarily blind to the rights and must be enlightened, as for the moment he or she is unable to acknowledge the existence of such rights; it is a stronger type of compassion than that from the empowered to the powerless (Limpens & Murrieta, 2000).

***Theory about free expression and participation of children.*** Life in an institution does not resemble a common family life, but this does not mean that institutional life is never successful (McKenzie, 1999, 2006; Zmora, 1994). In an orphanage, other children are in many ways substituting for family. According to Makarenko (1925-35/1996), peer recognition can bring deeper satisfaction than selfish fulfillment. The trend of empowering children has a long tradition in different settings in the world, allowing children to set rules and participate in the organization motivates them to take greater responsibility for their own well-being and that of their companions (Ackerman et al.,

2003). In a cooperative perspective, the group itself, not only the staff, cares for each child, building a support network that adults may not be capable of offering.

Following this important trend in children's participation, especially in the United Kingdom, a vast selection of documents was analyzed by Ackerman et al. (2003) which show the history, stages, and types of participation of children in their own management as school students, as family members, as workers, as research subjects and of course as objects of welfare where they are very much affected. A most important idea in this review is that coined by Hart (1992): the ladder of children's participation. The stairs of the ladder of Hart go from manipulating and deceiving children at the bottom stair, taking children as decoration in a second one, using them as tokens is the third, and assigning projects to informed children is the fourth step. Children are informed and consulted in the following step; adult-initiated projects sharing decisions with children are the sixth step; letting children initiate and direct a project is a seventh, and projects that are initiated by children who share decisions with adults would be the top of the ladder. This ladder may be used with children as young as 3 up to 18 (Hart, 1992; Reddy & Ratna, 2002). These are some of the contemporary attempts to democratize the life of children. These advanced attempts debate whether shared decisions or total empowerment of children is best.

Makarenko (1925/1996) offered one of the most important successful examples in this democratic effort in the communities for war in Ukraine after the Revolution of 1917 (Bowen, 1962). At those times vagrant children who were alone in the streets were perceived as "wild" (Makarenko, 1938/1954). As a solution, many were assigned to

Makarenko's educational projects framed in the Soviet Revolution's socialist values.

Makarenko's own nonfiction books thoroughly describe the organizational and ideological details about his everyday experiences.

Another outstanding historical example of democratic organizations of communities for children deprived of their family is Korczak's orphanage "Our Home" in Warsaw (Wolins, 1974). Here, activities were organized to create a society composed by and for the children with an ongoing evaluation under their own control. Communication and information were available to all. The tendency was to be educated for work taking care of oneself. There were multi-aged groups and they used apprentice-teaching exchange to train educators (Wolins, 1974). Korczak's (1925/2006) writing *When I Am Little Again: The Child's Right to Respect*, shows his profound knowledge and concern for the child's spirit and what it requires to respect its development. Korczak was perhaps the first clear defender of the children's right to respect. His memory must also be honored as a result of his tragic end during World War II, when Korczak, the orphanage staff members and more than 200 children were taken to Treblinka concentration camp and killed on August, 5, 1942. Reading his *Ghetto Diary* (Korczak, 1958/2008), written during the months before this tragic episode, brings the overwhelming feeling of anguish that the tribulations of sustaining the orphanage in that period meant.

The individual who learns about his or her own human rights must be a defender of the community even beyond the community itself before a broader society (Bowen, 1962; Makarenko, 1938/1954). This may be achieved by practicing the behaviors of a strong character for the benefit of both the child's own well-being as well as for the

community. The idea that benefits for the individual or community exclude each other comes from the implication that some personal sacrifice might have to be expected. However, according to Makarenko, as I pointed out before, the recognition of the group can bring deeper satisfactions than those of selfish fulfillment (Makarenko, 1935/1996). The idea of strengthening children's character probably is Makarenko's main contribution to education (Bowen, 1962).

Other important educators, like Montessori (1952/2007), also centered their methods on the building of character. Montessori stated that character is formed "only by given practice and never by command" (p. 209). It involves emotions, cognition of virtues as new versions of the child's own reality, as a person that may enhance his/her spirit. In modern Western-Northern terms we would be talking about his or her self-esteem (Branden, 1995) and individual value. This implies the values of their inheritance as a culture, an ethnicity, a tradition and a sense of belonging to a group that fortifies their identity.

From another viewpoint, critical theory would contribute in many ways to make these children take a critical stance. They can be helped to face their victimization, through specific activities designed to acquire the now necessary global citizenship (Farahmandpur & McLaren, 2001).

We could say the same about learning human rights, from Freire's (1971) idea of *praxis*. This implies listening to these children's own word about what a right is, listening to their own experience before we get started. Freire's concept of problematization would be the best way to do this, using questions that make the student reflect upon oppression.

Within an orphanage, unless there is a specific time dedicated to this purpose, it is difficult to find a possibility to teach human rights. This practice of teaching and learning is something to be observed in this research. This was researched having in mind that children who are informed about their human rights will be able to defend themselves better from any kind of abuse, especially regarding the four selected human rights of the child.

**Physical development of children.** There are different parameters to take into account regarding physical health of a child. In pediatric diagnosis, the first thing to note is size and weight in order to detect if the nutrition of children is adequate or if there are signs of malnutrition. The second reference is the child's physical abilities: Since 1934, Gesell (Gesell & Armatruda, 1974) established the classical standards for the motor abilities that a child should achieve as he or she matures. These parameters have been criticized for being overly orientated to genetics but still have defenders, because Gesell had important achievements, even in orphanage supervision of children (Dalton, 2005), and also many preoccupations including the influence of social environment in the child's development (Harris, 2011). The Gesell parameters could be useful when observing the children to determine if their development is normal. However, there are specific standards for Mexican children. For normal health parameters to use with Mexican children I refer to the Mexican Standard for Child Development (Secretaría de Salud, 2005), (NORMA Oficial Mexicana para la Atención a la Salud del Niño, 1999). For normal weight and size of children, I referred to the studies of Ramos Galván (1975, 1995) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (2004).

Now I present a review of the pertinent literature on real experiences of orphanages worldwide, and then focus in the United States. After that, I describe the current situation of care for children deprived of their family in Mexico.

### **Review of the Research Literature**

The purpose of this review was to describe the scope of the research problem and seek ideas about ways to address the challenges related to providing adequate care and addressing the rights of these children.

This review tells us that group childcare is a worldwide challenge that is addressed in a variety of ways. I also discuss the programs for children deprived of their family in the United States. Finally, I describe the situation of care, laws and protection for children deprived of their family in Mexico.

### **Care for Children Deprived of Their Family Worldwide**

The research that Payne and White (1979) directed in 16 institutions in different countries provides ample information on different cultural contexts that include Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America. Payne and White claimed that they have gathered information from the whole world. Yet, like other authors on the subject, (Innocenti Research, 2003; Wolins, 1974) they omit Latin America. Almost no data can be found about Mexico. This is an indicator of how the study of Latin American child-care programs is sorely lacking.

However, Payne and White's (1979) collection of reports are a good reference to study residential and other types of institutions for children deprived of their family. This is due to the fact that they have sought out successful practices and, according to them,



may serve as symbols of this care in distinct cultures (Payne & White, 1979). They have the view that residential care as a service is changing as it is constantly subjected to new research and understanding of childhood.

Wolins (1974) and Payne and White (1979) studied life for children in an Israeli Kibbutzim, which are the utopian-socialist Zionist communities; in Soviet collective experiences, and child group care in Europe and in the United States. Due to his Eastern European background, Wolins had a broad historical and social perspective of different possibilities of group care for children deprived of their family. To study group care, he used different research methods. One of them was a comparison of medical, psychological, learning and social problems in two different orphanages. Wolins also studied adult lives of children who had different experiences in these orphanages.

An antecedent of studying the Kibbutzim was Bettelheim's (1969) book, *The Children of the Dream*. Bettelheim became very famous and favored by academics for his contributions to psychoanalysis, treatment of autism, and social development of children in the Kibbutzim. However, after his suicide in 1990, a number of harsh criticisms came to light. Pollak (1997), a biographer of Bettelheim, claimed that Bettelheim's study was not reliable as he had language barriers and that Bettelheim's seven-week stay in one Kibbutz getting information from a translator was not enough to draw the multiple conclusions he wrote. However Sutton (1997), another biographer, validated Bettelheim's legacy in a more benevolent manner. The main questions in debate are, first, whether life in a community is a determinant factor in the emotional development of a child, regardless of other traumas or relationships with adults, as Bettelheim claimed. Another

question is whether peer relations during childhood, rather than parent relations, influence adult life. Wolins was probably influenced by this discussion when he observed peer relations, and determined that a prerequisite for efficient group care is a healthy influence of peer group in the children. Wolins (1974) followed the adult life of many institutionalized children to determine this prerequisite.

Two Spanish-language sources about care for children deprived of their family relate to experiences in Spain (Bueno & Rosser, 2002; Mondragón & Trigueros, 2004). These sources are closer to experiences in Latin America than those from the United States as a result of the language and inherited general culture. Mondragón and Trigueros (2004) discussed the care of minors in Spain. Their work was largely prescriptive and did not attempt to systematically evaluate existing programs. Although their recommendations were based on experience, they refer to other studies without specifying date or time. They outlined methods of intervention on behalf of minors, and classified the services provided in Spain. The classification contains three major groups: programs to improve social skills and the resolution of social problems; programs designed to reduce aggressive conduct; and programs to diminish bullying (Mondragón & Trigueros, 2004).

In Spain, as in the United States, there has been a strong movement against institutionalization of children deprived of their family. The trend is to place these children in foster homes. I discuss this alternative later, in the context of the debates in the United States.

Bueno and Rosser (2002), from the University of Valencia also in Spain, are specialists in intervention with marginalized minors. They offered general psycho-pedagogical and administrative guidelines for an institution that works with children deprived of their family individually or in groups. They called the method they use *terapia institucional* (institutional therapy). Bueno and Rosser (2002) gave the example of an existing institution called *Nazareth* and described aspects such as personnel, required technical equipment, everyday educational guidelines, and the human, physical, and organizational contexts. Bueno and Rosser recommended that in such organizations there should be clear mutual respect where hierarchies are built for better administration reasons, and not for authoritarian subordination. The definition of childcare given by Bueno and Rosser is interesting because they include the care that the children provide for themselves. Especially in poor countries, children on their own have often survived thanks to self-care. In third world institutions, where this experience is pervasive, children are used to participating in their own care as well as that of their siblings and other minors that end up under their care. This is why it is more feasible to propose a model that takes into account the active participation of children.

In Ireland, Catholic institutions became famous for extreme abuse toward children (Coldrey, 2000; Kinnear, 2007). In Great Britain everyone remembers Dickensian stories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Dickens, 1837/1998). England at that time became symbolic of child exploitation and abuse.

Other reports give information on orphanages in Eastern Europe, especially in Rumania. In this country, many orphanages exist today due to immigration and inability

of mothers to protect their children, who very often end up in orphanages. It was in Rumania where a famous experiment with 60 children in an orphanage found that the levels of cortisol (stress hormone) in institutionalized children increased at different hours and in higher amounts than in children who had better care (Carlson & Earls, 1997).

Some Asian countries like India and Nepal (Kretzchmar, 2004) have interesting examples of organizations that have been started by foreigners. In China, until very recently, only one child per couple was permitted by law to reduce the birth rate. Males traditionally take care of their parents and provide more status to the family (Johnson, 1993). Thus, Chinese girls were often at risk of death or abandonment as their families were expected to give a dowry when they marry; they often have ended up in orphanages or adopted by international couples.

In Africa, especially in Western countries, HIV has devastated the population. There are around 12 million orphans from AIDS in this continent (UNICEF, 2015). Combating AIDS in Africa requires more than medicines and education: it also requires food. While medicines are becoming more available, food is becoming scarcer. Obviously, the problems of orphanages and institutions are overwhelming and the children's conditions are far beyond the discussions about child welfare in the so-called developed countries (Zimmerman, 2005).

There are surprisingly few published academic documents on care of children deprived of their family in Latin America. Among these are the Innocenti Research Centre (2003) report, and Ponce's (2002) work on institutions for children deprived of

their family in Argentina. Ponce's critiques of the policies in this country are similar to those in most Latin American countries. Both documents describe the same problems about scarcity and difficulties in institutions for children deprived of their family. The Innocenti Research Centre document, titled *Children in Institutions, the Beginning of the End?* is a thorough study of institutions devoted to children deprived of their family in Italy, Spain, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, excluding Central American countries, and Mexico. The research finds that institutions have been frequently insufficient, dull and ostracizing for the children involved. They found that a new focus is on solidarity with children instead of "care for" children. The emphasis is on the problems that reformers in each country must confront according to their culture and specific social, economic, and political contexts. A decentralizing reform movement in European countries such as Italy and Spain seeks to protect children's rights. In Latin America this is more complicated due to systemic obstacles. The critiques of the Innocenti Research Centre (2003) addressed policies in individual countries that have impeded the protection of children in institutions. This is certainly what has been happening in Mexico (COMEXANI, 1996; Martínez, 2010; Muñozcano, 2004).

### **Care for Children Deprived of their Family in the United States**

I am studying care for Children Deprived of their Family in the United States for two reasons: First, because this is the country in which this research was developed, and second because it is one of the pioneers in questioning orphanages and searching for alternatives to group care, despite of now rethinking about orphanages (McKenzie, 1999).

Recently, in the second half of the 20th century, the prevalent approach to care for children deprived of their family in the United States has been foster care (McKenzie, 1999; O'Connor, 2004; Reef, 2002; Shireman, 2003). In cost terms, it seemed more efficient to render some financial support to foster families than to pay the entire fixed overhead and full salaries for staff in an orphanage. Other reasons may refer to lack of efficiency and attachment problems of the children.

Some authors argue that the lasting effect on the lives of youth who were raised in foster homes and were maltreated, neglected and/or exploited during their childhood implies a far greater social cost (McKenzie, 1999; Wayne, 1999; Zmora, 1994). A national study of United States by Maas and Engler in 1959 (as cited in Shireman, 2003) revealed that more than half of these children would never return to their original home and this would be more likely to happen after 18 months of being away. As Shireman (2003) commented, "the quest for permanent homes for all children became, and has remained, the essential goal of child welfare services" (p. 82). Some numbers may illustrate this more clearly: In 2005, there were more than half a million children and youth in the U.S. foster care system, a 90% increase over 1987. Three out of 10 of the nation's homeless are former foster children. A recent study has found that 12-18 months after living in different kinds of out of home care, 27% of the males and 10% of the females had been incarcerated; 33% were receiving public assistance; 37% had not finished high school; and 50% were unemployed (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). These data may be misleading because 80% of these children were already damaged when they entered out of home care (Dore, 2005).

Although these data could lead to think of foster care as a failure, a vehement debate persists about whether this option or institutionalization is best for children deprived of their family (Barth, 2002). Evidently, a permanent good family would be optimum, but the current crisis and the stress on families limit this possibility, and the debate is recovering relevance. The current conclusion seems to point to a wise combination of different kinds of services. These services can be tailored for cases according to thoughtful decisions of case workers who are well trained (Barth, 2002).

History of care for children deprived of their family may start after the independence of the United States from England. Partly due to immigration and industrialization in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were great numbers of homeless children in the streets of the cities (O'Connor, 2004). There were different attempts to provide a solution to this reality, such as the orphan trains that ran through the country to give children away to anyone who would want them (O'Connor, 2004; Reef, 2002; Shireman, 2003). The initiative of the orphan trains was organized by the Children's Aid Society, founded by Charles Loring Brace. Between 1853 and 1929 there were 200,000 placements supported by the orphan train movement. At that time, it was not possible to follow up consistently on all adopted children although there was an intensive effort to do so (O'Connor, 2004). Organizations like the Children's Aid Society, and others such as almshouses and orphanages were founded with the intention of caring for such children.

Beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, almshouses and orphanages were critically investigated and denounced. This started a strong movement against institutionalization (McKenzie, 1999). Almshouses' care for children was under attack by 1830; through the

rest of the century, almshouses were replaced mostly by orphanages for dependent children and institutions for delinquent children. According to Barr (2010) statistics show that foster family care did not surpass institutional care until 1950.

Balbernie (1966) and Coldrey (2000) addressed in detail the issues of attention that should be given to children in institutions which were absent in these earlier times. In the U.S. colonial period, children who were left alone were used as indentured servants or apprentices. This practice ended by the 1850s when immigrant labor replaced child labor and persisted until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the most critical reports were denunciations of the cultural genocide of Indian cultures by enforced separation of Native American children from their families. Such policy was part of the tragic experience of boarding schools for Native American children (Holt, 2002; Miller, 2009). Another important critique regarding cultural aggression is that the orphan trains took children from mostly Catholic homes and placed them in Protestant homes (Adams, 1995).

There has been a renewed interest in orphanages as a result of the apparent failure of foster care which continues to be questioned, because there have also been satisfactory experiences. There are reports of orphanages in the world from the 20<sup>th</sup> century that have raised successful citizens who contributed to their communities (Bowen, 1962; Makarenko, 1938/1954; Wolins, 1974; Zmora, 1994). In some cases, such citizens have even dedicated themselves to children in the same situation or have done research on the problems such children experience. An outstanding case is McKenzie (1999, 2006) an important author on the theme of orphanages who has edited a book with other interested researchers on the possibilities of rethinking institutionalization of children, versus foster



care in the United States (McKenzie, 1999). McKenzie (2006) also told his own impressive story as a child who grew up in a well-organized orphanage, even with some financial limitations.

According to McKenzie (1999), conservative policy makers in United States have advocated for orphanages as an instrument of social engineering. They assumed that single mothers should not be supported and thought their children would be better off placed in institutions. Yet, McKenzie (2006) himself declared that the trend to reconsider institutionalization should not be subject to political posturing at the cost of children. There is also a trend to increase funds dedicated to family preservation (Barth, 2002; Nelson, 1997). There are suggestions of alternative models of childcare in difficult times, such as kinship care, common in Latino and African-American communities. It has been found that often these families receive less adequate support when they care for family members than non-related foster families (Shireman, 2003).

In spite of the numerous critiques cited before, foster care remains the predominant trend in the United States, disregarding the more recent stress on reuniting families since the 1990s (Nelson, 1997). A family context is always considered a more humane option than living in an impersonal institution (Shireman, 2003). The child welfare system has worked intensively to place at-risk children in foster care until they can be reunited with their families to obtain the best possible outcome. The purpose of the Adoption, Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 was to promote more stability and to lessen the load of children placed in foster care (Herrick, 2002). In 1993, there was the Omnibus Reconciliation Act for State governments to start investing in family

preservation programs (Herrick, 2002). These efforts seem to have produced satisfactory changes by the nineties, but they have gone unrecognized by critiques (Nelson, 1997). Many children in foster care have often faced numerous placements due to lack of commitment from the foster parents, mistakes of the case workers, or errors of judges in separating or returning children to their biological parents (Barr, 2010; Barth, 2002). Children have protested as they are not consulted (Stafford, Laybourne, Walker, & Hill, 2003), and parents are not given advice when their children are taken away in spite of their urge to reunite with them. Contradictions prevail around denounces of abuse and the argument that abuse is less common in foster care than in general population (Robinson, 1988). Inconsistent follow-up from agencies have left many children unattended (McKenzie, 1999; Shireman, 2003).

Thus, institutional care for children deprived of their family is now being reconsidered. In the cases where children cannot enjoy positive family relations in spite of all, placements in orphanages have still been a good alternative (McKenzie, 2006). However, literature on residential care in the world and in the United States shows that there are great difficulties in caring appropriately for children deprived of their family.

Literature from Latin America about care for children deprived of their family is scarce. There are compelling conditions that call for studying such institutions. Current socio-political situation leaves children parentless due to migration, violence, illness and other consequences of poverty. There is only one important piece of research, Muñozcano (2004) regarding orphanages in the Mexico City area. Muñozcano reported her visits and interviews in 18 orphanages. The first half of her work is on Mexican laws

protecting of children, and she then states the obvious contradictions between these laws and their lack of enforcement in orphanages, many of which are run by Catholic nuns.

This is why studying an orphanage in a rural area of Mexico may become an important contribution to the literature on this subject.

I have explained the current need for research about care for children deprived of their family in Mexico. I now proceed to review the legal frame in which children deprived of their family are expected to have protection.

### **Care for Children Deprived of Their Family in Mexico**

Given the mentioned scarcity of literature, in the following section I review the legal antecedents and describe an update of child welfare in Mexico. I also discuss the importance of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in the current movement to protect children deprived of their family in this country.

**Laws to protect children deprived of their family in Mexico.** Legislation concerning minors has existed in Mexico since the Mexican Constitution of 1917. Nonetheless it is scattered among about 50 different laws, rulings, codes, decrees, agreements and technical norms (COMEXANI, 1996; Gamboa-Cuellar, 1991). Within the Federal Law, Articles 325 and 326 penalize infanticide and Article 335 penalizes child abandonment. In addition, there are supplementary articles with regard to various injuries suffered by children resulting from neglect (Agenda Civil Federal, 2003).

In 1978, Marcovich described what he called the *syndrome of the maltreated child* in Mexico. In 1986, there had been enough pressure from hospitals for the government to establish specific regulations within the *Secretaría de Salud* (National Health

Department), for the protection of children who have been abused. The regulation defines abused minors as those who "confront or suffer chronic physical or emotional or both types of violence, perpetrated by action or omission by parents, tutors, caretakers, or anybody who is responsible for them in an intentional way, not accidental" (Gamboa-Cuellar, 1991, p. 43) (translation L.Q.). However, exploitation and maltreatment of child-laborers is never mentioned in any of the aforementioned regulations. This is relevant for this research as most peasant children deprived of their family are or have been involved in field labor since age five. They have been often exploited, frequently unpaid, and ignored by legislation, given that the only law that exists is that which prohibits child labor, but it is unenforced in most of the country (Rojas, 2003). After being placed in institutions, children are often exposed to further ways of exploitation (Martínez, 2010).

In the wake of the signing of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, the Mexican government began to implement its mandates (COMEXANI, 1996). International conventions and pacts overrule the National Constitution, thus, these mandates must be enforced. The Mexican National Commission of Human Rights was inaugurated in 1992 (Galván, 2001; Limpens & Murrieta, 2000). Since the nineties, there had been denouncements of street children often exploited in sexual commercialization and labor (Azaola, 2004; Brizzio de la Hoz, 1991; COMEXANI, 1996; Figa, 1994). A more recent important research was published about this matter in which six non-governmental organizations participated (Makowsky, Flores, Saucedo & Quorum, 2010). From 1990, the rights of the child in Mexico have been promoted through the Law of Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents (Agenda Civil Federal, 2003). This

law stipulates that the sanctions the federal code imposes shall apply to those who violate such prohibitions. However, these sanctions do not appear in the Federal Code (Nueva Ley Federal del Trabajo, 1970). This means that exploitation is not contemplated as a problem of children's protection in the whole country. Such gap facilitates child exploitation given that the children and their families cannot denounce it. As a result, working children or adults letting the child work, become accomplices of the exploiter (Liebel, 2002). However, since 1990, the Mexican government has been compelled to take into account the mandates of the Convention and enact laws to protect children or reinforce already existing laws (COMEXANI, 1996). On this point, I cite Maria Inés Jurado, who is the ex-coordinator of the *Colectivo Mexicano de Apoyo a la Niñez* (Mexican Collective for Attention to Childhood) and one of the most committed social workers in the defense of policies for the protection of children and teenagers:

The Convention of the Rights of the Children upholds at least three new fundamental principles for understanding childhood and adolescence. These principles are: No discrimination, the superior interest of the child, and the right to participate and have free expression. Of the national policies which favor this population, the third one is particularly important in that it gives a new voice to children including the solution of their basic needs. One of the great surprises was found when a group of children openly defended their right to work, keep their job, be paid as an adult, and be independent of support from any adult. The welfare system considers children, even teenagers, as incomplete people, treats them as inferiors, and thus excludes them. The social and political conditions that prevail at this moment favor discrimination toward them, which is worse the poorer the children are. Nevertheless, we should see children as people whose rights are being violated principally by governments and economic trends associated with advanced capitalist expansion. When girls and boys are victimized, they are held in a space that belittles them and puts them in a state of subservient dependence on the State, which, in addition, treats their family only on the basis of how it performs and not as persons who are the subjects of their own action. When children rebel against this situation, the State imposes repression and labels the children as "maladjusted" in various media to justify its repressive actions. Another important circumstance of the proposed solutions is

the elimination of exclusion of children, which has prevailed until today, so that they can participate better in the elaboration of public policy. All national and local agencies, and above all, the national government that have signed the document (of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child), must now see how deeply they go into the spirit of the Convention of Children's Rights. (M. I. Jurado, personal communication, April 6, 2003; Translation: L.Q.)

This quote stresses the very important right of children to be included in the discussion about their rights to participation and to not be exploited, not only as objects of study, but as subjects of an overwhelming reality. As stated by Reddy and Ratna, 2002 from India, in this reality, children should be able to participate as individuals or through their organization or even as representatives of their organization, and they conclude:

Children are attempting to participate all the time. There are many groups of children especially working children's unions and movements that have demanded and occupied space to participate, including political space. We the adults have a choice, to be facilitators and partners in this struggle of our children or to continue to hinder it. If we choose to the former, the "learning" that we have to undergo is rigorous and complex. The territory is largely uncharted and we have to learn more from our mistakes than our successes. We have to develop sound theory and this can be done only by examining thoroughly on what already exists. This [document containing this citation] is a contribution to such process. (Reddy & Ratna, p. 41)

Such assertions provide compelling evidence of the need for a study that inquires how current policies for children apply or are absent in a real orphanage in Mexico and how its organization deals with respecting the rights of children.

The *Red Latino Americana de Acogimiento Familiar* (Latin American Network for Family Shelter) (RELAF, 2011), mentions that the rights to health and nutrition, and the right to free expression and participation are most violated. Also, it is widely known today that hundreds of children were ritually abused in Catholic institutions (Kinnear, 2007). Main denouncements come from Ireland, but there have also been serious scandals

of this sort in Mexico, which represent further victimization in the place where children should be protected. Martinez (2010) recently reviewed the scandal of disappeared children from an orphanage in Mexico, probably to be sold to be commercially or sexually exploited. Nájar (2014) also reports on an orphanage where children were forced to beg, have sex, eat rotten food, and were never allowed to leave.

After having reviewed the problems that exist regarding group care in orphanages and the missing literature of orphanages in Mexico and Latin America, I will now present a synthesis and critique of the literature review.

### **Synthesis**

In order to understand the complexity of the administration in group care in an orphanage, I have referred to Morin's (2008) paradigm of complexity. I also studied organizational theories to view the possible benchmarks for the evaluation, quality and coupling of services within organizations. I also described the prerequisites that Wolins (1974) formulated for efficient group care to have as an important reference. Regarding children deprived of family, I explained the psychological theories of Lebovici (1981); the attachment theory, and the resilience theory. These theories describe the problems that children deprived of family may present from their previous traumas and the possibilities of treatment. I also included theories on social development of the child, on learning about human rights, an on supporting free expression and participation of children. These theories provide the basis for the idea that childhood is a particularly

opportune time to learn how to defend and promote human rights in a supportive environment.

### **Critique of the Literature Review**

From the literature review, I noted a lack of research on the direct experience of staff and management within the organization of an orphanage, as well as how a respected setting works toward the defense of the rights of the child. These are the gaps that I sought to cover by doing this research. After the data collection and data analysis, I added other theoretical considerations that the research results took me to review again in Chapter Five. Then I came to further reflections and new ideas to approach conclusions.

### **Review of the Methodological Literature**

This research sought to understand how the staff members of an orphanage in Mexico view their work, and from this view conclude how specifically the four selected human rights of the child are fulfilled. I also studied how the suggested prerequisites for efficient group care are being held at the orphanage. The type of research I decided to do was a case study of an orphanage.

### **A Case Study**

In a case study, human behavior should be understood in its natural setting, as opposed to experiments. It is important that the researcher is involved as close as possible as a native while gathering information in order for the subjects to trust the researcher as one of them (Yin, 2003). This constitutes the paradox of this method: On one hand, it implies that the informant either ignores or forgets the fact that there is a researcher taking note of their words and that his or her words are being noted and recorded as



research data. On the other hand, subjects may be concerned about social censure or about their own moral restraints (Garfinkel, 1967). If one does not have an informed consent, and, thus, the informant is not aware of being an object of research, the informant's discourse would be much more natural, but there would be a serious deception toward the subject who is being researched. Doing social research within the real context has the advantage of the informant's familiarity within the setting; therefore, there is more spontaneity in spite of the limitations of the previously mentioned facts.

The design for this research is a case study as defined by Yin (2003), an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Gerring (2004) mentions that in spite of the fact that this method does not have much prestige among some scientists, Aristotle, Darwin, Piaget and Freud used case studies for their seminal ideas.

A case study may be more useful when an issue is being confronted for the first time or in a totally different way (Yin, 2003). Although according to Gerring (2004) the deep study of a single case has the aim of generalizing across a larger set of units, Yin (2003) and O'Leary (2005) posed different ideas. For Yin it is not necessary to accumulate different cases for a single case study to have a statistical representativeness, but in any case, to repeat the study as it is done in a laboratory in another time or context. This is something that can be done in the future using this research. O'Leary asserted that the value of the case that is studied is intrinsic, or it may be used to debunk or bring new evidences into a theory, or bring new variables to light.

Case studies generally:

- Allow for in-depth exploration
- Are an examination of subtleties and intricacies
- Attempt to be holistic
- Explore processes as well as outcomes
- Investigate the context and setting of a situation. (O'Leary, 2005, p. 150)

Yin (2003) and Merriam (1998) both stated that “why” and “how” are the right questions for a case study. In the case of the current study, the focus of the questions are not only “how” but also “what” in terms of the ideas and characteristics of which the participants would give information.

For Merriam (1998) there are three other reasons to consider a case study: the amount of control that the researcher has over the phenomena; the type of result that implies description and interpretation; and the consideration that the results are not presented as a cause-effect demonstration (Gerring, 2004). Another reason is to study an integral system, when the boundaries between the phenomena and its context are permeable. In studying this orphanage, the context, a poor rural area in the current Mexican social and political situation, is very important regarding policies, the financial situation, and culture. The boundaries between what happens in the orphanage and this context are certainly permeable, and the staff must face such situation.

A case-based method researches key cases in-depth. Through this research, general points are elucidated and evaluated (Gerring, 2007). This implies that one has thought about a broader series of cases, or has referred to another analysis of cases like I sought to do in my literature review. The antecedents I found (Wolins, 1974, Martínez, (2010) McKenzie, (2006) Kretzchmar, 2004) gave me a background to understand the complexity (Morin, 2008) of the organization I studied. Others, (Fussarelli, 2002) helped

me to understand the importance of coupling of the organization's administration and its educational and group care functions.

### **Type of Case**

Gerring (2004) pointed out that the selection of the case to study may refer to the typical, the extreme or the diverse case. In fact my study of this orphanage is the first research that goes in depth on a specific case of an orphanage that is known for taking good care of children instead of evidently isolating, neglecting their nutrition, maltreating, exploiting or impeding their voice to be heard; all of which typically occurs as was found in the literature (Muñozcano, 2004; Nájar, 2014; RELAF, 2011). Here, my criterion was purposely to bring a diverse case to research, because typical orphanages in Mexico have already been studied, denounced, and judged when corruption does not block the process (Martínez, 2010; Nájar, 2014).

### **Summary of the Research Literature and Application to the Study**

Although foster care and the reunification of families is the main trend in caring for children deprived of their family in the United States, in the rest of the world orphanages are still the prevailing solution. In poorer countries, the conditions of these institutions are mostly inadequate, with the exception of those that European organizations sustain or provide a great deal of their financial support. This is the case in Mexico, where signing of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child by the government in 1990 has moved non-profit organizations and legislators to build better protection for children deprived of their family. In Mexico, the research on orphanages and care for children deprived of their family is very scarce. This literature review

contributes to understanding the processes in an orphanage that is working to defend and protect the selected human rights of the child, based in the theories of Ainsworth (Ainsworth et al., 1974) Cascon (1985), Ceglowski (2004), Freire (1971), Kagan (2004), Lebovici (1981), Kohlberg (1985), Korczak (2008), Limpens and Murrieta (2000), Montessori (1952/2007), Makarenko (1938/1954), the Mexican reference for children's health of the National Health Department (Secretaría de Salud 2005), Morin (2008), Piaget (1932/1962; Piaget & Inhelder, 1950/ 2000), Ramos Galván (1995) Vygotsky (1978), and Wolins (1974).

Now I describe the methodological approach for my dissertation research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to learn from an orphanage that seems to be achieving a successful protection of children deprived of their family in Mexico. Through the views and reported experience of the manager and five staff members of this orphanage, I explored two main subjects related to the caring of children in the institution: First, four human rights of the children, selected from the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child; and second, delving into Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care together with the participants. This purpose was followed through the process of describing, explaining, learning, examining and recognizing ideas to fulfill the research objectives found below.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

For this case study, I sought to fulfill the following research objectives:

Objective 1: To describe and explain how the participants from an orphanage in Mexico view their work.

Objective 2: To learn about the organizational challenges and opportunities that arose when setting up and managing this institution.

Objective 3: To examine the policies and practices of this institution in light of challenges and opportunities for the fulfillment of the selected four human rights of the child.

Objective 4: To work together with the participants delving to identify some characteristics that can be included along with Wolins' prerequisites for efficient group care, in order for an institution like this one to achieve the best practices.

Next, I present the paradigm I chose, and elaborate on the methodological discussion for this piece of research.

### **Research Method**

In this section, I introduce the paradigm I chose for this study, and the method I worked with. I present the participants and facilities of the research context, as well as the procedures, data source, and coding method for analysis.

#### **Paradigm**

The paradigm I chose for my study was a heuristic, qualitative one that studies the phenomena or manifestations of reality as they appear to observers (Tyson, 1970). This approach also studies the subjective experience of social actors (Husserl, 1962; Shütz, 1970). In this piece of research I studied the view and experience of the participants as social actors regarding their work, through the lenses of the four selected human rights of the child and Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care. Thus, a qualitative paradigm was the most adequate.

A case study, as I explain below, may be merely qualitative, but it can also have quantitative elements. In this case, I did three simple quantifications. First, I give a weight number to certain significant words according to their importance in the manual coding for data analysis. Second, I found the frequency of those significant words that were most used by the participants, in order to identify the general themes. In a third

moment, I added the frequencies according to similar ideas to cluster them in order to finally identify main categories.

The rest of my analysis was qualitative, following Byrman (2008) and Gibbs (2007) stages for qualitative analysis.

### **Methodology**

The research problem consisted on understanding the view of the participants to explain their organizational opportunities and challenges. Also, how their ideas and practices support or obstruct the fulfillment of four selected human rights of the child, and to elaborate with the participants on Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care. This is why I decided to do a case study of this orphanage. The literature and justification for a case study were explained in Chapter Two. However, I present next a brief summary about why I decided to approach this research as a case study.

### **Case Study**

A case study attempts to understand human reality in its natural setting rather than in a controlled experiment. If the research is embedded in the contextual setting, the subjects are more willing to trust the researcher. A qualitative case study implies a paradox between the expression of true information and the informant's social censure or moral restraints (Garfinkel, 1967). If participants did not have to sign an informed consent, then their discourse would be much more natural and spontaneous, but it would imply a serious deception or betrayal of their trust. However, as said before, studying a case has the advantage of participants being more comfortable than in an outside setting because they are in their familiar environment.

Resulting from the above reasoning, I decided to do a case study of this orphanage.

### **Participants and Facilities**

First I present the participants, and then I explain what the facilities and conditions of the orphanage are.

#### **General Introduction to Participants of This Research**

The participants gave me a good amount of information about their background; however, I am not using anything that may disclose their identity, but only succinct information about the tasks they perform at the orphanage and some general characteristics.

**Presentation of each participant.** I must first mention Alma, the founder, who was hardly ever seen by myself and is not a participant, but according to several assertions by all the participants, all the staff members follow Alma's guidance. This is what they take as the official training to work in the orphanage. Everything comes from her ideas or spiritual messages. For this reason, I take her into account in the study as a reference. I do not use any other information except what the participants said, because I do not have Alma's consent.

**Amanda.** Amanda is the young manager of the orphanage. Amanda was born in a foreign country. She follows Alma's ideas and projects and considers as extremely important to be savvy about nutrition. Amanda and Alma are now also the "mothers" of many of the children, apparently all girls, and kept her son with her "as a young baby, until he was weaned with carrot juice" (Amanda). Then he was in the house with other



toddlers and babies, under Betsy's (whom I present below) charge; currently, Amanda's son is in the boy's house.

Amanda continues with all the work that Alma has proposed, and is actually a key person to bring the project to reality. Amanda also gives nutritional consultations and performs other administrative chores for the project.

**Betsy.** Betsy was born in the same foreign country that Amanda, and traveled to Mexico after participating in an exchange program in a Far East country. Betsy felt she was received as family everywhere in Mexico, and after traveling for two years she decided to settle down to live with this community. This is what Betsy reports as her previous experience before participating in the orphanage. The training she received from Alma is what rang true and that is what she uses to educate the children under her care. The spiritual path is what has attracted Betsy to commit to this project. Her son grew up at the orphanage and is now away at college in another city. Betsy's participation at the time of this research consisted of taking care of the home for babies and toddlers.

**Cristina.** Cristina said that after she broke up with her partner and quit her job, she decided to change her life. Both Cristina and Betsy said that they compared what they saw in their trips with the environment of the community at the orphanage, and this is what convinced them to become members of the staff. For Cristina, this "renewed her strength and brought peace and conviction on her path." (Cristina) At the time of the interviews, Cristina was working as a teacher of the children who cannot attend regular school and have learning challenges.

**Dora.** For Dora, her artistic family is an important part of her previous experience. They gave her opportunities in schooling and creativity through arts.

Dora had taken a year off from school, and traveled to [another country], working while learning Spanish. On her part, Dora's participation consists of designing the menus. "I am in charge of most issues to do with public relations. I answer emails and attend people who come for different searches." (Dora). Dora helps with management of administration and public relations. It was with Dora with whom I had the most frequent interactions.

**Eloy.** As previous experience, Eloy refers to his family's teaching tradition, given that his father was a teacher for many years. "They have been involved in health and physical education" (Eloy). Eloy recalled that when he was in the second grade, there were trainable mentally-retarded children in his school:

. . . and we had recess together at the same time. Some of the children were up to age 15. I felt protective and helpful to them. One day one of the kids hit me and I just said "it's OK, it's OK" and tried to calm him down, instead of acting as a victim, hitting back or telling on him. (Eloy)

Eloy volunteered to help those children when he was in third and fourth grade in elementary school.

I have been a part of the organization since 2007, and a full-time staff member since 2009, and I am currently in charge of our agriculture and self-sufficiency projects. I am also in charge of our boy's home, which [at the time] had six boys, ages five to 14. (Eloy)

**Flora.** "I had no previous experience with children or with orphanages, not even as a teacher. This was my first experience. I don't work at the orphanage anymore

because they could not afford to pay teachers any longer.” (Flora) Flora did not participate at first, but she helped as a volunteer in several tasks. “. ” (Flora)

I was part of a volunteer program, just helping out with whatever they needed and decided to stay there for a year. Then they asked me to teach English in the school or help children with their homework. First, I was helping another teacher and after a couple of months I had my own group. This went on for a whole year, and after that they began to pay me half salary and gave me my lunch food, and I also lived in the area for volunteers for free. At the beginning I was working with another teacher, but shortly after I was on my own. At first they asked me to follow the official curriculum from the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (Public Education Ministry), but after some time I began to have more confidence in myself and taught what I found interesting for the children, not excluding the official program. When I was a volunteer, all decisions came from the orphanage staff I was helping. At the beginning I thought we were going to share the decisions. Then I started doing my project-based education, but also following the other teacher who is a Montessori guide with her own school project, that included the children from the orphanage and children from the surrounding community. (Flora)

### **Support Facilities**

We can find the following support facilities within the institution: There are eight home/houses build in a round architecture and of good size to hold the children that live there with their parent. Each house has at least three bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and one or two bathrooms. All toilets are dry. There are two large buildings with facilities for visitors and a center for special practices and a swimming pool. The school has 10 rooms, five dry toilets and washing sinks, and a basketball yard. There are extra prefabricated rooms where some of the staff sleep, and a large kitchen. Some houses are occasionally used as classrooms. There is also a computer center, and a library.

At the entrance of the setting there is a reception, where there is a small store, with a porch behind; a project for a restaurant to be located in this porch has been set out, but has not come to realization. There are six small houses that are for rent to help

support the orphanage. We must also take into account the hen coops, greenhouses, orchards and several fruit trees that produce food for auto sustenance, which according to one of the participants who was interviewed (Flora) is not enough. They often have to buy food and accept donations from the outside.

In 2012, when I did most of the interviews, the orphanage had 32 children. They currently (in 2016), have 15 boys and 14 girls in five homes. Eight children have reached age 18. Three of them are still there; one still attends the school as she is mentally disabled, but the other two are now doing college studies at a larger city nearby and commute every day to school.

I will not give any more details in order to protect the identity of the placement. I will only say that the closest town is very poor but there is one larger, more prosperous town and a medium-size city nearby.

Once having presented the interviewees and a description of the orphanage buildings and grounds, I will explain the procedures for this research.

### **Procedures**

Now I explain how I conducted the analysis.

### **Boundaries of the Study**

To delimit my research design, I proceed to expose my interests in studying this particular case.

**Interests.** My interests in studying this case were based on the following criteria:

***Pre-comparison.*** I have studied the research cases carried out in other orphanages that are not helping children to develop in a dignified and healthy way (Muñozcano,

2004). I have also visited some institutions of this kind and observed the negative features described by Muñozcano (2004). This case study can serve as a model to compare to others in further research.

***Familiarity with the context.*** The research was performed in an orphanage in Mexico that is my native country, specifically in a poor area. Once having reviewed the literature on orphanages and group care of children deprived of their family, I established the objectives for this study.

I lived close to the town where the orphanage is located for about two years. I am also familiar with the culture from my work with elementary rural school teachers and living in a poor town. I have had children deprived of their family as neighbors, and have learned details about their lives from family members, friends, neighbors, or people who have adopted them. I have also studied how they are exploited in agriculture, mining, and by landowners who want to reduce wages, and packing companies who hire children temporarily (Confederación de Asociaciones Agrícolas del Estado de Coahuila, 2002).

### **Location**

The states in the north of Mexico are more prosperous than those in the south. The poorest states in the country are the ones which are located in the far south, also the more diverse in Indigenous cultures, typically marginalized. Usually migration occurs from the south to the north before crossing the border to the United States (Rojas, 2006). Many of the families settle in one of the states on their way, where they find temporary jobs. The state where this orphanage is located is in one of the mid-southern states.

I chose this orphanage for this study as it is located in a representative State of Mexico to find children deprived of their family that are the most vulnerable victims of the current critical financial situation. The other reason to select this orphanage was that it has a reputation for protecting the human rights of the children.

### **Population and Sample**

In this section I present information about the population and sample. I will also explain how I found the setting, and how I recruited the research subjects.

**Population.** The population of this research is constituted by the orphanages of the rural poor areas of Mexico. The case is focused on an orphanage in a rural mid-southern state of Mexico.

**Sample.** Gerring (2007) pointed out that the selection of the sample for a case to study may refer to the typical, the extreme, or the diverse case. My criterion was purposely to bring a diverse case to research, because typical cases, mostly doing a disservice to their sheltered children, have been previously studied and denounced (Muñozcano, 2001). I also thought there is more to learn from a placement where there is a special effort being done to respect and care for children in an adequate way.

### **Finding the setting**

By asking acquaintances and through Internet research, I found and visited a few orphanages. The one I decided to work with is set in a small village in one of the mid-southern states of Mexico. I learned about this orphanage through a cousin who worked close to where the orphanage is located. I contacted the orphanage and made an

appointment, and then visited their setting. During my first visit, the only visible part to me was the entrance, with a small store, where the reception is located. I entered, announced myself, and waited for about 15 minutes. The person who came, whom I believed was the manager's assistant, received me at a porch, behind the store. I later learned she was a member of the staff, and actually one of the participants of the research: Betsy. I explained what my goals were in doing a study of the children's human rights in the orphanage and to work on some prerequisites for efficient group care previously established by an important researcher. She responded that they would gladly accept. A few weeks later, Amanda, the manager, signed a permit for me to proceed with the research and we established some conditions. I gave her a copy of the informed consent for her and for whoever the participants would be. The consents were written in Spanish and English.

### **Subject recruitment**

In an earlier section of this chapter, I have given a description of each participant. I was able to gather interviews of two categories of participants in this institution: The manager, and five staff members, including one former staff member.

I would have liked to interview all nine members of the staff, but two of them declined to sign the informed consent and another two were unavailable. Nevertheless, it was convenient that the number of participants was small in order to facilitate the in-depth analysis of data. I actually was able to begin two more interviews but the participants, as I said above, refused to sign the informed consent, so I did not go on interviewing them. One participant was no longer working in the orphanage but accepted

to give me an interview. The other participants were extremely busy and the length of the questionnaire had to be reduced in some cases, considering that some of the information had been given by other participants. I presume this reduction did not have a significant impact on the results but there is no way to assure this, because I cannot guess what other participants could have contributed.

There were six participants interviewed for this study, five female and one male. The manager, whom I call Amanda, four staff members (with the pseudonyms: Betsy, Cristina, Dora, and Eloy), and one person (pseudonym: Flora) who was part of the staff as a volunteer and a school teacher for 3 years and was no longer working there.

The participants, whose description I introduced at the beginning of this section on methodology, are the following:

- Amanda: Manager of the orphanage.
- Betsy: In charge of babies and toddlers at the time of the interview.
- Cristina: Teaches and helps challenged children.
- Dora: In charge of public relations, designing menus, helping with administrative issues.
- Eloy: In charge of the boy's house. Does and supervises maintenance.
- Flora: Elementary school teacher (not working at the orphanage any longer).

### **Data Source**

Following is the explanation on the source of the data for this study, which was interviewing. I also explain the building of the research instrument (see Appendix C).



**Interviewing.** The data sources of this research were interviews with the manager and five members of the staff.

I visited the orphanage daily from Monday to Friday during 10 months in 2012, volunteering as an academic helper for the children. I spent more or less three to four hours each day, during which I could gather four interviews: first with the manager (Amanda), and then with three staff members (Betsy, Cristina and Dora). Afterward, I gathered two more interviews: with Flora, in 2014, and with Eloy in 2015. Because Eloy was too busy to give me time during the day, he asked me to give him another option. He suggested that I hand him the questionnaire for him to self-record the questions with his answers. Therefore, and to lessen the burden of the very long interview, I omitted the first part of the protocol, since I had already talked with him about his previous experience and contributions in an informal way and I also had information from a booklet they handed me. This is how the last interview was self-recorded, by Eloy, in 2015. I believe there was a possible impact on the final results because of this different manner of interviewing. The missing observation of the context, and the fact that children were not present in the last interview, could have affected the candid responses other participants might have given to the questions. However, Eloy had more time and concentration to think about what he answered, which probably gave deeper insight and information. Nevertheless, in some sections of this self-record, he does pause, repeat or sigh, which means he was also giving spontaneous answers.

As stated before, all the interviewees were extremely busy and difficult to reach. Scheduling interviews took a very long time. Acquiring an interview was a victory and

answering was partial in most interview sessions. The participants only had time for a few questions and then had to get busy with something else, so I completed each one of the first four interviews in several sessions, while the manager or staff members were busy working with the children. Only in the case of Flora I had a more relaxed time to ask her all the questions in a situation out of the orphanage, so the interview was accomplished in only two sessions while we had a meal together.

All interviews were held in English, as all the participants are native English speakers. The informed consent was signed during the process of the interviews because the staff wanted to read it carefully before signing it and did not have time at the first attempt I made for them to sign it. I gradually gathered all of the signatures of the consent written both in English and Spanish (see Appendix E). The Mexican staff-members that I started to interview were the ones who declined to sign the informed consent, which they actually didn't even read. For this reason, I did not use the information they offered.

Next, I explain how I came up with the research instrument.

### **Research Instrument**

In this section, I explain the ideas and preceding circumstances that helped me develop the research instrument.

#### **Pilot Study of the Research Instrument**

Before I began this study, I interviewed a teacher who worked for 10 years in a then-successful orphanage in Mexico; after the founder died, that organization had many drawbacks (C. Turrent, personal communication, March 6, 2006). The interview with Turrent had two sections. The first one was about the interviewee's personal background

and any personal experience she wanted to offer; the second section referred directly to the organization and functioning of the orphanage.

From this pilot study, I learned that it was important to design the basic structure of the interviews and from there, let it flow in an open way to allow the interviewees to give their information as freely as possible. Therefore, I selected a semi-structured interview protocol. I proceeded in a similar way as I did in that interview from 2006, only with more pre-determined questions.

### **Developing the Instrument Questions**

From the pilot interview mentioned above, I learned that the information about previous experience working with children was very valuable. I realized that I needed to find out who the interviewees were, and their background in order to be able to perform their tasks in the orphanage at the time of the interview. Therefore, in the first part of the instrument, I began by asking about prior experience, before asking about the participant's contributions and current activities at this orphanage. However, for the purpose of keeping the identities of the participants concealed, I decided against presenting this information in the final report. This choice might affect the full understanding of some results, but the protection of the identity of the research subjects is very important.

After I had the basic information about the participants and their view of their work, I wanted to understand the history of the institution, their opportunities, as well as the main challenges they had. Opportunities are situations that open new possibilities to develop a project, generating pathways that appear in different ways during each

process ; regarding these opportunities, I wanted to find out if there were some that could be taken as an example for other institutions to be aware of.

Having a view of the organization itself, I needed specific lenses to research about the main problems in building and sustaining the orphanage. According to previous research, the violation of human rights of children has taken place in many orphanages, especially their right to adequate nutrition or healthcare (RELAF, 2011; Children's Best Start); victimizing children who had already been abused (Muñozcano, 2001, 2004); not listening to the children's voices or not allowing them to participate in decisions that affect them (Cascon 1985 ; Limpens & Murrieta, 2000, COMEXANI, 1996), and sometimes exploiting them (Nájar, 2015) or even yielding them to criminal exploiters (Martínez, 2010).

Because I have had experience in the area of defending the human rights of children, I had the clear reference of the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child and was able to select the articles of that Convention which refer to the human rights that I wanted to explore. The official document of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Organization, 1989) is written under international legal terms. In Appendix A, I present the articles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child from where I selected the four human rights for this study. As stated before, the articles I used are 24, 19, 23, 25, 27, 36, 39, 12, 15, 32, 33 and 34. The version in Appendix B is not the official protocol of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child written in legal language. Instead it a "fact sheet" (UNICEF, 2006),

an easy to read version of all the 42 effective articles that the Convention includes. In this version the selected human rights of the child for this study are marked with asterisks.

In the last part of the instrument I decided to look at the main activity of orphanages: caring for the children, and also explore to what extent this is being fulfilled in an efficient way. To have a deep understanding of this aspect, I needed a specific lens. For this purpose, I resorted to what I found in the literature review that seemed to have covered the broadest previous research on group care settings, and included the elements needed for efficient group care of children. This is how I decided to use Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care in the last part of the interview.

For a full view of the final research instrument, see Appendix C. The total number of questions is 77, divided in four parts, each regarding one of the research questions for this study. There are a total of 12 questions regarding Research Question 1 (How do participants view their work?). The first two ask about the participant's previous experience. Then there are four questions about their participation in the orphanage and three about the contributions they bring from their experience. Four more questions deal with their relationships with the children and other members and any other activity they have outside the community.

Regarding Research Question 2, (Based on the participants' expressed opinions, what were the organizational challenges and opportunities when setting up and now administering this institution?) the instrument includes seven questions. Three talk about the history, opportunities and challenges of the institution, and other four about specific possible challenges they may have encountered.

The third section refers Research Question 3 (What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding the four selected human rights of the child to nutrition and health care, to protection for further victimization; to free expression and participation and to not be exploited?) For this part of the research instrument, I formulated six questions on nutrition, and seven on health care. Nutrition and healthcare are together because that is the way these items are contemplated in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United nations, 1989). I decided to address mental health with the right to be protected from further victimization because mental health issues are dealt with by the services that usually visualize and protect children from victimization.

Thus, for the second selected human right of the children, there are three sections about attending general mental health issues, another two regarding sexuality specifically, and five questions about how the staff confronts misbehavior, because it is then when punishments or harshness toward children may appear. After these questions, come two more about special treatments given to previously victimized children, if any. There are five questions about the right to free expression and participation of the children, six about their right to not be exploited, and one more open question for this section asking if there was anything else the participant wanted to add.

The fourth part of the research instrument was related to Research Question 4 (What characteristics can the participants of this orphanage and the researcher determine as prerequisites for efficient group care in this institution to achieve best practice?)

This last section of the instrument was divided in two parts, one with five questions about staff and seven about the children's circumstances in general. The second

part has one open-ended question about the participants personal ideas for best practice. Then, given the suggestion of each of Wolins' prerequisites, I asked on how the participant thought they fulfilled each one.

The full research instrument questionnaire is found in Appendix C.

The calculated time to answer the whole questionnaire was a maximum of four hours. This is why it was necessary to do the interviews in several sessions during my visits, whenever the interviewees were available. Most of the interviews were held in 2012, at times when the staff members or the manager were watching children or doing some task. The interview with Flora was outside the orphanage, in 2014, in two long, relaxed sessions while having a meal together. The interview with Eloy was recorded by himself in 2015. The answers by Flora and Eloy are probably more complete because they were not given in such a stressed situation as the rest of the interviews.

### **My Role as Researcher**

I, as a researcher, did not try to test a preconceived hypothesis for this research, and my approach was not a totally open-ended inquiry. Departing from the literature review to delve into my interpretations, I understand that my research questions, the research instrument, the interviews, and also the interpretation of their answers, were based on unavoidable subjective assumptions. My own participant candid observation brings issues to be examined in greater depth (Kvale, 1996) as I attempt to do below.

Now, I reveal some of my personal insights in reference to my methodology.

### **Building a Construct from Only Interviews**

To find out about personal views only through interviews is to focus on a totally subjective “object,” meaning that I had to keep in mind that the object of this research was the subjective appraisal of the participants, not themselves. To remember this was not very easy, but it was necessary in order to respect the participant’s views. A view includes expectations, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, opinions, attitudes, and so forth. An interview is not an exchange of these but a one-side loaded situation, where the interviewer can only ask questions. In fact, in this case, they were not even very free questions, but rather questions that were previously structured. In some cases, a demand to expand on something else was posed, but mostly the interviewee was solely the one who was free to express. One of the main problems in this process occurred when I had to reconstruct information extracted from the interview. It was only information about what the interviewee was willing to say for the public or for me, as the interviewer, to believe. Thus, the collected data was information about what goes on in the orphanage only to a partial extent. Then, the question was: what reliable information could I offer from all the work that was done during my visits and interviews to this orphanage? I elaborate more on this concern in the following paragraphs.

**Views.** My main question regarding this methodology was: How can I contribute for this work to be useful for the literature about the matter, for decision makers, and for my future work? Did the interviewees say anything that is relevant if they only want to give a good impression and they are not willing to display conflicts, contradictions, fears, misunderstandings? In general terms, what are the drawbacks they feel, see and know



about? I wondered what conclusions I would be able to draw from here. That was my main preoccupation.

I was interested in pursuing an open dialogue to be able to ask new questions, if there was a request for this in the conversation. However, the interviews turned out to be performed under great pressure, though good will. I let the interviewees offer their own ideas, which allowed for richer information. The purpose of interviewing was to learn as much as possible for my own project of supporting and working with other orphanages, and to give policy suggestions to the *Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, DIF* (Mexican Welfare Agency). This learning is what I kept in mind within the interviewing process. I tried not to ask leading questions and let the participants express their perspectives, but the interview can be called semi-structured as I let the participants' responses guide some of the questions that might not be included in the protocol.

The intent of my interviews was to gather information about the experiences at the institution as they are lived by the participants. These were standardized open-ended interviews. I did not only collect explicit information about the orphanage, but also behavioral data, opinions, feelings, other knowledge, sensory data, and background information (Patton, 2002).

**Neutrality.** I was there to collect information, not to make judgments, and as I said before, this was the most difficult aspect of the procedure. I intended to analyze the results together with the participants before analyzing or reporting results, especially those related to the six prerequisites for efficient group care. However, this was almost impossible given the very tight agenda of the participants. I did make notes about some

observations while interviewing, trying to stay aware about how the person was affected by the questions and by my note-taking. One of the interviews was not really a face-to-face experience but the interviewee, Eloy, asked me to give him the written questions to answer them after he was finished with his duties, late at night. He did a recording, read the questions out loud and then gave his responses. Eloy returned the recording to me and from there I transcribed his answers. I avoided the first part of the questionnaire to not over burden him, and because I had this information from a written booklet they handed to me and an informal conversation we had had before from which I had some notes. As said before, I believe there was a possible impact on the final results because of this different manner of interviewing. I could be missing some body language implications, which I did not take into account in most cases. Aside from this I believe Eloy had the opportunity of thinking more about his responses and giving deeper insights.

Sometimes interviews took place in situations where I was also participating, so I took brief notes and then wrote the answers when I got home, and compared them with recordings, which were not always very clear. Once, after such situation, I asked the interviewee (Dora) to please check the answers. On that occasion, she gave me the notes back without any further comments. However, at the end of the study, I asked Dora again to see a list of the themes that I had extracted, and then she did make important remarks which I report at the end of Chapter Four.

Although I clarified in the informed consent that this was not a detective-like interrogation, I did expect some extra sensitivity in some cases. Of course, in case of maltreatment or abuse of any kind, it is mandatory that I report to the *DIF* (National

Welfare Agency) authorities. This fact was clearly disclosed in the informed consent. Fortunately, no such situation appeared. There was one situation that could have led to a misunderstanding or conflict but it was resolved at the moment by a dialogue with the participant. I did remember in that moment I was there to learn from the expressed opinion and report of the participant's experience. Nonetheless, issues seen in literature about group care in institutions may still remain concealed from the researcher and not have ever been actually registered in the discourse within the interviews. Some of these issues are discipline, stealing, and —addressed more frequently in recent years— sexual abuse, physical and psychological maltreatment, racism, sexism and other equity problems, as well as neglect, labor exploitation and other forms of further victimization of the child. Such issues may affect the development of the institution as well as the children involved. Should this be the preoccupation in learning about this for the sake of all institutionalized children? In this case, the view presented by the manager and staff obviously wanted to show the best of them, and their being “very well and everything working right.” However, some contradictions that arose between one version and another gave me further information. What is a researcher expected to display when contradiction is found? What I thought was that no matter how manipulative the interviewees' expressions appeared, above all, they manifest their values and desire to project a certain image of what things should be like. Given the institution's 14-year experience, this was most relevant for research results and this is what I attempted to focus on.

*Self-questions about other facts observed during the interviews.* Among other facts that were observed were the environment, the activities performed during the interview, the way the interview was given, the body language, and so forth. Interaction between the children and the interviewee often took place as we spoke. Should these interactions count as data? Another question would be stated around expressions that were seen during the interview, such as gestures of disgust or pleasure, hesitations, or phrases that begin and are obviously given a second thought. Should such details only be described or should the researcher interpret them and take them as part of the interview, to think and expose as data for conclusions? Is there an ethical restraint for the use of such manifestations that show up even if the interviewee is not identified? Is his or her consent only for the textual interview or for the context of the interview as well?

All of the above questions puzzled me during the interviews. I resolved them in the most honest way possible, but they still concerned me as I approached my conclusions. From this point, preventing bias is addressed as follows in the next paragraphs regarding ethical issues, ethnocentrism, bias and member checking.

*Ethical issues.* Interviewing was a delicate stage due to ethical reasons. I asked sensitive questions regarding the participation of the interviewees in different activities. From the moment I arrived, I had to be cautious to communicate my purposes clearly enough, so that the manager assistant would accept my work as a researcher. Volunteering and participating for research purposes was also important in the ethical area. I needed absolute acceptance of all participants for every volunteering experience as well. Although I asked for written consent before the interviews, most participants asked

me to leave the letter and said they would return it to me afterwards. I insisted in every piece of interview that I needed their written consent, but it was complicated for them to carefully read and sign, which most did, except the two Mexican staff members. All consents were written in Spanish and English.

I understood that the orphanage supported my research, but they also needed my support, so I volunteered in the areas in which they requested for help.

Only I know the names and identities of the interviewees. Pseudonyms were used in all products. Journal notebooks and the USB where the interview responses, audio recordings and process notes were copied are being kept under a locked cabinet. Originals were eliminated from computers.

Before starting, I had the consent of the orphanage manager. I did not find cases of oppression, abuse, injustice, or labor exploitation. However, I did find a problem regarding the use of the English language with Mexican children who had to learn it by force, and many of them were showing some speech problems. I did point out my own concern about this to some of the staff, but they did not seem to take it into account. However, aside from the psychologist that the orphanage hired by instruction of the *DIF* (National Welfare Agency), there was a speech therapist working with some of the children, and I coincided with this person because she asked me for a ride when leaving the orphanage one day. She was very concerned about the speech problems of the children and said she believed they might be related to bilingualism, but also to previous problems the children had before coming to the orphanage. I then assumed that my preoccupation about language problems of the children was already being addressed by

this therapist. Although this is not a criminal or illegal issue, I discuss the problems involved with this situation in the conclusions in Chapter Five.

***Ethnocentrism and bias.*** How did studying children deprived of their family, and orphanages affect me? Since I was a child, seeing children like myself begging in the streets, sometimes without their parents, made me feel pain and guilt. Why should I have what they do not? How could I help them? Through my career, working with Indigenous teachers, founding a non-government organization, being a therapist and researching on children's conditions, I went deeper into the structural social and political problems that caused children's poverty, abandonment, and neglect. When I retired, I felt that I had to get closer to the most vulnerable of those children and search for a deeper understanding of what their needs are. I recognize a persistent anxiety that appeared several times during my research. This anxiety made me judge before finding arguments to accept or reject actions that were reported by the participants from the orphanage I studied.

Following Gibbs (2009), interview results may be considered purely informational. The interviewee, in this case, was the expert in his own view. His view was what I had to learn from. So what was really going on, what the children were feeling, thinking or experiencing, what I could see or confront, became irrelevant while interviewing.

I intended to analyze with the manager and staff the underlying operational principles or mechanisms of this institution and see how their implementation benefits or harms the children. Especially regarding Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for group care, my objective was to delve together with the participants on how to develop these or other

recommendations. However, I found I was lonelier than I thought in this endeavor. It was not possible to discuss or present ideas, books or feelings during the research process, mainly because the participants were too busy, and also because they have very strong views about their work and seem content enough about the way they perform.

***Member checking.*** Given the aforementioned problems with time, I had little opportunity to produce knowledge together with the participants, as I had planned. However, the richness of the information prevailed, and the interview responses were transcribed just as they were emitted. Also, the interpretations of these materials were all based on the analysis procedures and mainly matched with the theoretical frame.

Nonetheless, in order to ensure validity, after extracting the relevant themes, I organized them in a list and wrote to Dora once more asking her to review these themes. She wrote back with some corrections that I stated as a final theme list. I wrote a conclusion paragraph that she corrected as well, and that is what I set as the final summary statement.

Now I present the method I used to code the information in order to analyze the information.

### **Data Analysis**

Now I will present the procedure to analyze the information for this research.

#### **Coding Method**

I used Bryman's (2008) Stages for Qualitative Analysis following the details of each stage given by Gibbs (2007). An explanation of how I developed each stage follows.

**Coding stage 1: General review for analysis.** I gave a different color to highlight each significant question of the instrument—set in four sections that corresponded to each Research Question—in order to facilitate a first general analysis of the responses (see Appendix D).

Before transcribing all the responses of the interviews I designed a table of three columns. I referred to the first five participants in the first column, where I also included specific references to Alma. I will explain the use of the other two columns in Stage 2.

When transcribing the responses from the first five interviews, I did not have the interview with Eloy yet. So I did not include his responses in the same format with columns, except for his personal information regarding his previous experience. However, when I transcribed Eloy's responses, I also used colors in the transcription and then searched for the recurrent themes that I identified in the rest of the data or other themes that were new. Examples of this transcription are found in the last page of Appendix D.

I classified the contents of the interview responses by cells that correspond to each of the participant. Each instrument question is addressed in a different section.

I did a first general reading to do the previous analysis as corresponds to Byrman's Coding Stage 1 (Gibbs, 2007), searching for general ideas.

**Coding Stage 2: Further thematic search.** Stage 2 is the search of crucial themes according to Byrman's (2008) stages.

In a second column designed for the transcription of responses, I acknowledged a first search of relevant ideas in pieces of text and I gave them a name, a color and a



weight number, according to the importance that I judged the word had, given the context. Following Gibbs (2007), I colored the keywords with the same colors that I had assigned to the theme they belonged to.

The numbers given to the weight, also colored, could go from five to ten, according to the importance that the participant seemed to be giving to it, to the length of passages that talk about the same idea, or to the repetition of the idea. I gave a five to the least important name and a ten to the most important one. Numbers one to five would have referred to issues that were irrelevant, which I did not include.

The same name could be given to various passages (every place where the same idea appeared) and a same passage could have several names on it. This name, for instance “spiritual” or “vegetarian” is often found in other passages. In several cases, I found that there was a piece of an answer that made sense to a question but was already inserted in a previous transcription. Nevertheless, if it was relevant as a response to another question I set the answer again; however, I set the repeated answer with the color code of the previous insertion, just to keep in mind that the answer had been used before. This was for the purpose of not counting the keywords more than once in Stage 4 of this analysis.

Examples of this are provided in Appendix D.

**Coding stage 3: Coding of the text.** Gibbs (2009) referred to this stage as being close to grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), given that theoretical implications can result from the data. The purpose of this stage is to find thematic ideas in the text.

For coding stage 3, the thematic search could be done with a software program or in a manual way, which is what I decided to do. To begin the manual coding I printed all the responses that had been transcribed by columns in Stage 2.

I used color pens to make remarks using the same colors I had previously assigned to represent an idea or type of answer, the questions from the instrument that the responses referred to, or information given about such ideas. Then I searched for other passages in the text that referred to the same idea, noticing the main names I had identified in Stage 2 and other new ones that I identified with the colored pens. Appendix D provides examples of this stage as well. In these examples, we can see that I used the color pens to write comments about the passages, phrases or names that identify the idea that the participant is talking about.

#### **Coding Stage 4: Retrieval of Categories.**

In this stage, called the retrieval stage (Byrman, 2008), (Gibbs, 2007) suggests coming up with a thematic list, by naming some general idea and calling it “themes” “template”, or “categories”. At this time I used the word “themes”. I set the list of all the themes that I identified by Research Question, as a means of a general synthesis of the results. This list is found in Table 1 (page 118) in the left column. For validity purposes, I sent it to Dora for her to do a revision, as a member check. Dora’s responses are registered in the second column of this list. Preferring Dora’s revision I decided to look for the repetition of words, such as “relationships”, “food”, “love”, “challenge”, and so forth. In fact, my own reaction to such words may have crystallized or changed completely after visualizing the context of my own Research Questions. I tried to pay

attention to this in order to diminish my own stereotypes. Then, I thought, this constant consideration could result in paralysis. What was there to do then? The advice of Gibbs (2007) is to watch for repetitive patterns, which could be translated into major meaningful themes.

I decided to perform two different actions to be able to retrieve the most important themes. First, I determined the number of the most frequent words found in the data coding of interview responses and listed them in Table 2 (found in page 128 Chapter Four). Second, when I saw that ideas could be put together in more general themes, I clustered items to extract main themes, and decided to then call them “categories” to distinguish them from previous themes, and then gave a new name to each identified category, set in Table 3 (found in page 129). These categories were labeled as Category “A”, Category “B” and Category “C” more than for hierarchy purposes, to identify and match them with theoretical references for their analysis in Chapter Five.

The development of the Coding Stages is presented in Chapter Four, as I analyze the results that this coding yielded.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to learn from an orphanage that seems to be achieving a successful protection of children deprived of their family in Mexico. Through the views and reported experience of the manager and five staff members of this orphanage, I explored two main subjects related to the caring of children in the institution: First, four human rights of the children, selected from the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989); and second, delving into Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care together with the participants.

The research problem consisted of understanding the view of the participants in order to explain the opportunities and challenges when organizing and managing the orphanage, and how their ideas and practices support or obstruct the fulfillment of four selected human rights of the child and Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care.

In this chapter, I first present the analysis of data, as well as the results and interpretations of these data. I have transcribed some of the responses given by the participants to the instrument questions used in the interviews under each research question. This was done in order to illustrate the themes that were identified.

The last section of this chapter reflects on the limitations of this study.

After this presentation of Chapter Four as an introduction, I will now display the analysis of the data.

### **Analysis of Data**

Throughout the manual coding (Gibbs, 2007) I explained in Chapter Three, I identified the general themes, which I present as results within each research question. The exposition of these themes is illustrated only by a few representative quotes from the interviews, because the transcription of all the quotes would make this chapter excessively long. In Chapter Five, I consider the main categories as the result of this research.

I will now present the research results by research question and their interpretation:

### **Presentation of Results by Research Question**

Here I present the results of the research regarding each research question.

#### **Research Question 1: How do Participants of the Orphanage View Their Work?**

The participants seem to view their work as followers of the leadership of Alma, the founder, whose views, philosophy and messages guide this project:

The name of our orphanage, as all names that are given to the children came from Alma. The names come to her. It is a means for them to recognize the new beginning of their lives at the placement. (Betsy)

“Alma guides us. She has the experience and knowledge.” (Cristina)

“I think Alma has helped us a lot, she has a lot of knowledge in those areas in working with kids with special needs . . .” (Amanda)

The following quotes seem to indicate that the staff and the manager also view their work as an opportunity to heal physically and spiritually. Learning the practices and

proper nutrition set by the founder seem to be required, because this is their way to have a healthy way of living for themselves and as parents of the children. It is also part of working toward a higher level of spirituality.

“... [Living here] renewed my strength and brought peace and conviction on my path.” (Cristina)

“Nutrition is a fundamental element in the orphanage. What children eat is designed by me, following Alma’s books and ideas that come to her. (Dora)

I had an incurable chronic disease. After experimenting with different allopathic and alternative medicines, diets and doctors and surgery that did not work, I was desperate for a cure [...] after two days in the orphanage I knew this was my place. I healed from that disease in a couple of years here. (Dora)

The participants also have the view of a spiritual path and a sustainable project, joining the orphanage as part of a new kind of family:

Our project is really not only the orphanage. The children we have are part of the family that also works on other projects, such as the school, the center for specific spiritual practices, nutrition consultations, organic agriculture, and above all, spiritual growth . . . (Amanda)

“[...]more than just a job a way of life and a spiritual path. They all abide to the same philosophy and values.” (Flora)

**Interpretation.** According to the staff and manager, leadership of the orphanage comes from the view, philosophy, messages and guidance of the founder. Participants also view their work a spiritual path that has helped them to heal emotionally, physically and spiritually, always through proper nutrition. They view the project as not only an orphanage, but as a sustainable project, and being part of a family. They say they are working towards a higher level of spirituality through mutual help and respectful relationships.

**Research Question 2: Based on the Participants' Expressed Opinions, What Were the Organizational Challenges and Opportunities when Setting up and Now Administering This Institution?**

Answers about organizational opportunities and challenges follow.

**Organizational opportunities.** The initiative for this project aroused from the desire of the founder and Amanda to help children and youth. The founder had the financial assets and was able to buy a 10-hectare piece of land where the project stands. Among these efforts was their school project:

“... the school project, [...] included the children from the orphanage and the children from the surrounding community.” (Flora)

I think [our opportunity came from] personal contacts, because most of our sponsorships over the last couple of years have come from word of mouth. As more people we have got to know us here we locally had a lot more opportunities come our way. (Eloy)

Another opportunity to thrive has been their volunteer-programs that bring people to help them from Mexico and different countries.

I think what has really been beautiful through the years is that there are volunteers that have been coming and going, they have been getting extracurricular classes, like dance classes. (Amanda)

“... they prefer long-term volunteers who will commit for several months and really try to form part of the community and support the organization . . .” (Flora)

As more people have got to know us here we locally had a lot more opportunities come our way. We now have a really cool organization working for us. And from them telling other people about us it's been huge. We really became known in the areas and that has worked a lot. (Eloy)

**Organizational challenges.** At the beginning, before they began the project that goes beyond the orphanage, the founder and Amanda felt very frustrated, since they were trying to improve the future lives of children in the surrounding poor community and

getting no satisfactory results. That was when they decided to start the project. Their first challenge then was the legal procedures that the *DIF* (National Welfare Agency) presented for them to be able to receive children:

When we received these five siblings, we asked the people from *DIF* (Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) (Welfare Agency) if they were sure [the children] would not return to their families. They said they wouldn't but after a while their mother did come to the *DIF*, and tried to get them back . . . This was very dramatic for everyone; for them as well as for the rest of our children, because this somehow meant that their emotional stability and support were not secure—they all wondered if someday the same wouldn't happen to them and they would be taken away from here. When they took them back, the youngest girls got very ill. The *DIF* notified the National Health Department (Secretaría de Salud) which sent for all our children to have a physical exam . . . (Amanda)

**Financial issues.** Possibly the most challenging issue has been the financial problem, maintaining healthy numbers, and getting sponsorships for the children.

“The monthly cost per child is more or less 1,400 pesos” (Amanda) (Note: That meant about 100 USD at the time).

“It is very difficult to run an organization like this especially if you don't have the funds or you are like trying to be self-sufficient.” (Flora)

The biggest challenge? I'll probably say financial . . . and reputation . . . people are hesitant to sponsoring a child or to give money to a place that hasn't been around for a long time. This is our 14<sup>th</sup> year, and it's no longer a challenge. Also when the global economy went to the toilet especially in the U.S., which affected Mexico and Europe, where our funding comes from individuals. So that was definitively a challenge then . . . It was six months into the school year in 2008, when things started going bad. (Eloy)

“The staff consists of only 9 people including those who help with accounting and maintenance. All these staff are volunteers and are only provided with basic needs. Other than these staff we have five paid employees.” (Cristina)



**Schooling.** Another challenge has been schooling. Many children never went to school before or were in many ways academically deprived. Training teachers for this has also been a complex task:

Our kids require a different type of attention, like if there are many kids in the classroom and there is a less controlled environment it's hard for them to concentrate. Like in the first years we did have most of our kids there but what happened after a few years we noticed that they were not learning much because the focus is constantly on the disciplining and they couldn't even get to the academics and with us it's not like that anymore. At first it was . . . at first we could not even focus on education but at this point it's definitively more under control. (Cristina)

“ . . . a lot of them haven't gone to school and they are eight or nine years old and they don't learn in the same manner. So we have to give them special classes.” (Dora)

When I asked where they got the training for teaching, the answer was: “From just many years of working with the kids and we have been training ourselves for years now since we have been having the kids over 8 years” (Dora).

Staff-parents speak to children in English most of the time, but usually mix both languages. Three of the staff members speak good Spanish. The others have a strong accent and sometimes make grammar mistakes both in spoken and written Spanish, as I observed during my visits at the school classroom. The Mexican staff could hardly speak English at the time but they were learning. Given that the Mexican staff declined to sign the informed consent for the interviews, I deliberately asked the participants to speak only English during interviews, so that I could transcribe these interviews without having to translate; however, they still included sentences and words in Spanish.

**Getting the right parents for the children.** The challenge of getting parents was not foreseen as such. The parents of the children arrived searching for spiritual growth:

We need our staff to have a greater purpose in life. The ones that are committed this way started working as parents. Most people came because they were attracted to our project and they had common goals and were interested in nutrition and our spiritual community before the orphanage opened. We had many volunteers who were attracted to our greenhouse project or to the orphanage, but they were not yet committed to their own spiritual growth. (Amanda)

**Administration.** The orphanage does not report problems building a proper administration, apparently run mainly by Dora and Eloy. However, a lot of changes may be the manifestation of management problems.

The organization is evidently run under a very vertical structure, which only one participant noted:

They all use strategies of the director. The same philosophy they use to discipline and treat all the children, which reflects the staff member's beliefs. They are pretty hermetic about their beliefs, unless you want to become one of them. (Flora)

**Interpretation.** The opportunities and challenges that the participants identified in the organization were: First, the opportunity of using their desire to help, and secondly, the financial resources to buy a large piece of land. Other opportunities that were identified were getting to be known by word of mouth and internet, and the volunteers that come to help them.

The challenges they encountered were legal procedures, finding the right parents for the children, schooling academically deprived children and management, evidently under a vertical structure. The most important challenge for them is the financial sustenance.

**Research Question 3: What are the Participants' Ideas and Practices Regarding the Four Selected Human Rights of the Child? What are the Participants' Ideas and Practices Regarding the rights to nutrition and health care, to be protected from further victimization, to free expression and participation, and to not be exploited?**

In the next section I describe and include responses about each right:

### **The Right to Nutrition and Health Care**

First I address nutrition and then health care:

**Nutrition.** The participants hold nutrition as their highest priority related to physical and spiritual health. The diet for themselves and the children is strictly vegetarian, based on the nutritional principles written, practiced and taught by the founder. They do not allow any combination of protein and carbohydrates:

What the children usually have for lunch are vegetables, eggs, cucumbers, carrots, chickpeas, soy [...] *tortillas*, lentils and other legumes like beans, etc. No water while you eat. They never eat bread, except the older kids who take only whole bread. They used to eat no fruit at all, but they changed this recently. Now they are doing 80% vegetables and 10% fruit and 10% protein. Before they would not mix carbohydrates with protein, and now I don't really know about the change, if they combine with protein or if they still consider fruit as carbohydrates. This also depends on the age. (Flora)

Following the same nutritional principles, they claim to have made it possible for children who were medicated to leave all medication aside once they adhere to nutritional guidelines. According to these same ideas, however, older adolescents are free to eat as they choose with some guidelines, once their immune system is strong enough:

If they go out they take care of their health and become aware of their bodies and what causes them bad digestion and know what their limits are. And at 11-12 they can tell you they don't have mucus because they don't eat what causes it, and they can sit and remind other kids about it. (Amanda)

Teens can eat whatever they want once their immune system is developed... they can eat more variety of foods [...] but most of the references come from the director's books. She has written several on this subject. (Flora)

If they have good reports for school they can have some special *papas* (potatoes in Spanish) or something like that. (Eloy)

**Health care.** Under the participants' ideas, healing for most illnesses comes mainly from the founder's guidance and help. All staff members follow the same nutritional guidelines which have healed some of them also of chronic illness.

"We cannot get ill; we cannot afford to be ill because we have too much to do" (Betsy).

"Other staff members teach [you] what to do when they are sick and everything. Beside you have to do [special practices], eat a certain diet, and follow a very strict schedule. (Betsy)

"If a child is sick, no mucus forming foods, such as cooked carbohydrates, nor dairy products are given. However, there is very little illness, so most of the time only the most basic care is required." (Dora)

"A special diet is tailored for sick children who are constantly being watched by one of the staff members." (Flora)

They said that they always take precautions such as giving children the proper nutrition and isolating ill children who may be contagious. They also said that there is dental care and sight revision for all children twice a year including orthodontics.

Nutrition and health are central aspects of our work. It is important to support the children who have arrived to recover their health using nutrition as much as possible. If taking medications we try and take them off it little by little. We tailor the diet to each child's need, using mainly fresh vegetables. (Betsy)

Prescription medications are avoided as much as possible, but if children need medication, (usually upon arrival) they are seen by an allopathic doctor or, if necessary, taken to the State Children's Hospital. They then fully recuperate in the orphanage with the help of proper nutrition, sometimes also homeopathy. (Amanda)

One of the participants tells that there is a problem with the water supply:

We get water from rain cisterns, which lasts up to March more or less and then we need to get *pipas* (the water truck) to supply. Of course it helps a lot to have dry

toilets, and to bathe we only pour a bit of water on a *tina* (bathtub) and they have to bathe with that using a sponge. (Betsy)

Sometimes water must be bought, but there are rain water captivation systems in the settlement where there is abundant rain during the rainy season, which coincides with the summer months.

The orphanage has past records of all children, but many are incomplete due to previous living conditions or due to the fact that members of their families are unknown.

**Interpretation.** To understand the organization of this placement demands immersing in their ideas of nutrition and spirituality, thus their specific way of taking care of the children's health. Their guidelines are not submitted to any nutritional authority and have their own theoretical standpoint, and they base most of their health beliefs on it.

The water scarcity is something that is not mentioned in most interviews; however it may affect them seriously in the future.

Mental health care is addressed in the next item.

### **The Right to Protection from Further Victimization**

During the interviews it was clear that as a practice to protect them from further victimization, children are taught not to feel sorry for themselves nor allow others to feel sorry for them.

. . . falling apart and crying and dissolving in tears whenever anything happens, kind of just retrieving from facing problems, which in their moment had a purpose and had a function, just that now they are obsolete, they don't need them anymore and they are no longer of any use to them, on the contrary, they are detrimental to their growth . (Dora)

Cristina said to a crying child: "...are you being *enojona*" (grouchy in Spanish)? (Cristina)

“...or they don’t want anyone to touch them, or they behave victim-like” (Betsy)

After hearing what was said in different quotes like the cited above, I asked Flora if it is forbidden to cry. Her response was:

It depends on the child... If it’s a tantrum they stop it immediately. Usually children know that if they do certain things, that there is going to be a consequences and it depends of how used they are to having rules. A lot of them come from situations without limits, so it’s very difficult. (Flora)

[We teach the children] ...through living here and talking about what we believe

and how to make ourselves stronger, weaker, happier etc., through our life choices and

also through giving conscientious expanding talks. (Eloy)

Communication meetings are held weekly between the children to improve their interactions and relationships. Eloy says that if they find it necessary, the children receive sexual education during these meetings.

Sexual abuse and other traumas are spoken about with the psychologist or with their parent, who is also each child’s closest confident. I have teen-age boys. They ask a lot of questions about like dating and girls and, I mean, everything feels very, very normal and very teenage. So we haven’t had any problems with the kids regarding that. I think like when you are going from the 13 to 16 years. [...] We can do a lot of sexual education for the kids so they understand like how sacred that act should be. After you are married and want to have kids and that kind of stuff. The kids take it really, really well because they see these kids that use to go to school, and for now the boy has to drop out and work to support, even if they are not together as a couple but to provide, for help provide for the child in most cases. And the girl drops out of school as well and . . . Our kids don’t want to go that route. (Eloy)

Also sometimes they do have sexual education in class but we provide the care when we are always aware of what they are doing all the time, and not allowing anything to happen, keeping them active, doing constructive activities all the time. I think that is the most important thing rather than pulling up the past. If the staff are feeling good with themselves the patterns are healthy. Knowing the background and histories of the children we structure their life to make sure that other children are protected, for example if we know a child has had a sexual abuse experiences we don't let them bathe with others, they have to bathe alone, not with other kids.” (Betsy)

Flora is the only one who mentions a specific case: “There are children who are more socially functional than when they arrived. One of them could not control sphincters from sexual abuse . . . [They] probably [resolved it] because they are really very dedicated.” (Flora)

When problems with relationships appear, the participants claim that they are resolved by the parents, addressed in meetings, or if it is a more serious issue it is taken to the founder who is like everybody’s mother. The *DIF* (National Welfare Agency) requires the visit of a psychologist. This *psicóloga*, (psychologist, feminine gender in Spanish) who has professional training, is chosen by the orphanage. However, staff-parents do not have much contact with this person or information from her. Children with special psychological needs, according to the interviewees, are taken to the founder who has worked extensively with all the children and has a lot of experience with special cases. When I asked Dora if she believed the children need this psychological treatment she responded:

So, so much! There is a lot of training and a lot of teaching and learning that needs to happen. But they have already learned a lot of habits, so it’s kind of get-rid-of-the-other habits and get back to who they want to be . . . We had the kids evaluated by a team of psychoanalysts (sic) and then the kids were treated. (Dora)

Their opinion is that there is not one treatment that works for all children, but that it depends on each individual case. In contradiction with this last statement, they claim that they do impose clear consequences for different behaviors and have a clear structure and schedule, something that also seemed contradictory with other statements heard later:

“No, no special programs. Like I said, love and attention goes a long way with these guys; lots of love and lots of attention and that’s pretty much it, and it works.”

(Eloy)

Participants sustain that every action in life brings a positive or negative consequence:

Their main strategies for previously victimized children are respect for the specific characteristics of each child, and to prevent misbehavior, just discipline, warnings and consequences, a positive motivational system is preferred and, if necessary, a negative consequence system. [. . .] They have very clear consequences for different behaviors and a very clear structure and schedule.”

(Betsy)

. . . We don’t allow such behaviors. It is not right to act like that. We are constantly correcting and working the patterns, I order for them to *superar* (overcome) the patterns, that eventually fall away. For example *Eddie* (pseudonym) came with a lot of aggression. He was always destroying, breaking every toy. Or *Manuel* (pseudonym) used to steal. By correcting this they eventually stopped it. (Betsy)

“Taking responsibility for one’s actions is of primary importance.” (Dora)

When asked if the parents have interviews with the psychologist about parenting or they just follow their own philosophy, they responded:

Well, we definitively have a philosophy among us and we discuss problems of the kids between our whole group. Whenever someone is in a charge of course and comes up with better plans... but most of the kids don’t have such severe problems, to be honest. We really just have like one or two who have more severe problems, but most of them don’t, and they’ve improved a lot through the years. (Dora)

I can’t answer. I don’t know the person, or how they have worked. Sometimes they are aggressive, or they bring a tough exterior image, or they do bullying, or they don’t want anyone to touch them, or they behave victim-like, there are different manifestations . . . Among the staff we treat any issue. Sometimes a psychologist has worked with the children, but over the years all of us have acquired experience to work with them. Through the coaching of Alma who has a degree in psychology . . . (Betsy)



I think the most important thing that all of us are learning is that there is no one treatment that works for every kid, you have to be able to feel the essence of the kid, understand who they are, understand what their issue is in life and then treat that and then deal with it you know? We have a psychologist that comes. I am not specifically involved but I know when the day comes and my kids go and meet with her regularly. That has been going on for many years . . . (Eloy)

Flora has a more critical view: “It is important that the staff is trained in dealing with and supporting the emotional and psychological consequences of abused children.” (Flora)

### **The Right to Free Expression and Participation**

Regarding this right, participants say that they organize assemblies and weekly meetings at every home. In these meetings, they say, children learn to speak their minds in a positive, forthright way and to become more confident of their communication.

Children may even ask to be changed to another parent if they feel they have many problems with the one they are with. During these meetings as well as in everyday life, children are encouraged to be open.

Within the home we have like little meetings with our kids every night, just to kind of talk about their day and things that happened, and we have it together. If there is like a serious issue going on... and because our kids have been so empowered, if there is an issue they'll talk to their parent about it right away. (Cristina)

And then you feel more confident to speak out and be more open in a positive way instead of rudely or saying something that hurts. We definitively try to encourage the kids to be really open and really expressive and to feel good about expressing themselves instead of acting out. (Dora)

A meeting lasts half an hour to an hour. But with teens we try to teach them [spiritual practices] and other things. With them it's different; it's at a higher level. In their individual growth . . . and then if there is anything they want to bring to me, or if there is anything they want to talk about they bring it to me. (Amanda)

To foster free expression, according to participants, the children are given many opportunities for artistic expression:

We have a lot of kids here that are really really artistic and are taking special art classes in town with a famous artist that lives in (the big town). You know, whatever their passions are we really want to encourage it in any possible way. (Eloy)

Dora grew up with theater and dancing and in December she put up a theater play with them and towards the beginning we did have a few theater things, not lately, but we had like dancing and like art. (Amanda, 2012)

“It is important [at the orphanage] to give children responsibilities and allow them to participate in different physical and artistic activities.” (Flora)

Another important task the orphanage sets itself is to improve the expression possibilities of the children. All children are spoken to in English by the English speaking staff, and in Spanish by the Spanish speaking staff. The Mexican staff was learning English as well, and the English speaking staff spoke some Spanish. Thus children hear both languages, or rather a spontaneous mix of them all the time. The following are examples of this, taken directly from the interviews: *Una adolescente se fue con unos parientes* (a teenager went with some relatives); *tocada* (music playing reunion in Mexican jargon); *trapear* (to mop); *albañil* (mason worker); *expedients* (files); *superar* (to overcome); *enojona* (grouchy); *cancha* (play field); *cariño* (endearment affection).

The older children help when people (generally foreigners) come to visit and act as guides and as such, practice their English. The children are almost bilingual. They participate in specific classes, painting classes and learn different things through the different workshops that are carried out by volunteers throughout the year, like arts and crafts, writing, musical instruments, and computing. (Flora)

In terms of freedom, the orphanage staff and manager claim that there is also freedom to stay or leave, because at the orphanage, all doors are literally open for anybody to leave or stay as they choose:

...One day a nine-year older escaped from here with other two girls. The same day, the girls were found through the DIF, and we accepted the nine-year-old girl back because all her siblings were here, but not the other two girls. We decided that if they did not want to be here we just forget about them. We couldn't deal with going after children who didn't really wanted to be with us. We give them a lot of freedom. (Amanda)

### **The Right to Not be Exploited**

Participants tell us about the children's responsibilities at the orphanage, first explaining that except when they are very young, children have to do basic home chores and basic self-care.

As they get older, usually in the beginning they just take care of themselves. When they are choosing their room, and they have to keep it tidy, and make their bed, like usual things, make their own hair, and stuff like that. And then as they get older they might have a responsibility like to feed the rabbits, or take out the rabbits and put them out of their cages in the morning and in again at night. Or maybe as they get even older they might have another responsibility like it's their job to put the food back into the fridge or clean the table or something like that, or everyone may have a small little job like someone organizes the silverware or other little things, the kind of responsibility that gives them increasing degree of responsibility, just to cooperate. (Dora)

If a child wants to, he or she may take care of younger children. It is never an obligation: "Caring for younger kids? That really comes from them, if they want to help out they can but we never oblige them to. We never put them in that position" (Betsy).

"If we go to outings, the older hold the hand of the younger kids and things of that nature, but nothing beyond that. Only staff take care of kids" (Eloy).

Children also help with school cleanup when it doesn't interfere with academic life:

“ before class we would clean up the school together with the children.” (Flora)

Sometimes small manufacture businesses are encouraged so that children can learn from experience:

...you know... you can just make anything if you put your mind into it and create your own little business. We do try to instill that into them making food, making popsicles, and selling them, which also sells well. Just little things to show them that it's not so difficult to make some money, to put your mind to it, get organized and find out what people like and make the thing, and then present it well so you can be more self-sufficient. (Dora, 2012)

Older children help with chickens, cropping, watering the orchard and other general occasional cleanup of the grounds for a few hours, one or two Saturdays a month, and their daily home chores. Boys can participate in building and other tasks and are paid for with money kept by parents for them to buy something they need or want.

The older ones help to paint or carrying. They save their money, like the older children do more strenuous jobs and they can accumulate payments that are not given to them but it can be used to buy an IPOD or something they want, but this is not for the younger kids. (Flora)

Children are encouraged to pursue careers and interests in areas of their own choice by giving them books, and opportunities to develop their interests and tutor their skills:

One of my boys told me the other night, that (sigh) I forget how he worded it but he said um . . . he said, before I wanted to do um . . . I forget . . . he surprised me with I don't know, like drive a bus or something and he is “now I want to be a CHEF (*great emphasis*). Can you please teach me to cook?” And I am like “of course! of course!” You can cook with me at the night time you know? So that's a really beautiful process being with the kids helping them to grow and... and become beautiful people. (Eloy)

If I was on the chickens I would take my kids with me and collect the eggs. When we have some avocados, in the avocado orchard, we pick the avocados, if we need to water the lemon trees or pick the lemon trees, my kids will come with me. But they love it. They are preteens and teenage boys and they love going outside and they love agriculture and that kind of stuff. So it's usually something of that nature. Nothing is ever forced you see . . . they look forward to it when it's routine. (Eloy)

Money to sustain the orphanage or purposes other than education does not come from children's labor:

“When earning money they don't give it to them but tell them how much they are accumulating, they don't receive money physically but it's like virtual money which they can exchange for something they want” (Flora).

In this section, Flora made an extra comment regarding another human right, the right to a family:

I think they try to cover their right to a family I don't know how much it is achieved but they try to feel they have a family, not an institution. And I think they do try them to feel protected and safe. (Flora, 2014)

**Interpretation.** Regarding the four selected human rights of the child, the participants' ideas reflect the following beliefs:

For the right to nutrition and health care, they believe that a strictly vegetarian diet based on the founder's ideas can resolve both proper nutrition and health care. Only in some cases they use allopathic medicine, mostly when the children arrive. Then their tailored diet allows them to leave medications and be healthier. According to the participants, both children and staff are healed this way physically emotionally and spiritually.

About the second selected right, to be protected from further victimization, the orphanage staff has a specific philosophy. They believe in avoiding self-pity and

emotional fits, and during my visits, my general impression was that it was somehow forbidden to cry. At the end of this research, after the member checking review by Dora, she clarified that their main idea is to teach children not to believe they are as victims of life.

They also use a system of motivation and warnings based on the idea that every action brings a consequence. The orphanage management accedes to the Welfare Agency's requirement and brings a psychologist, but the psychologist is not clearly asked for advice. In some cases, staff-parents said they don't even know the psychologist. They seem to feel self-sufficient to treat all problems. Participants spoke very little about sexual issues. They claim that they usually speak about all problems in meetings and/or appealing to the founder's advice.

Apparently, the children are loved and taken care of. However, looking at these quotes, the participants don't seem to be conscientiously protecting them from further complications that their traumas may bring.

Referring to the third right, to free expression and participation, the staff said they meet with children in assemblies and home meetings, so that they can be confident to even change parents. None of the participants had ever heard about the ladder of Hart for participation of children.

The interviewees said the children have art expression opportunities, and that they are taught to be bilingual, so they are able communicate with more people from around

the world. Children also and have a lot of opportunities to express through artistic activities.

In the discourse of participants we also find the word “freedom” meaning they are not obliged to stay in the setting, given the lack of locked doors or confinement. They seemingly allow children to take decisions about staying or leaving the orphanage, implying freedom of decision.

About the fourth right, to not be exploited, the participants spoke about the children’s responsibilities. The participants give their view about the right to not be exploited explaining the chores that children perform at home, at the school, and in the facilities. Interviewees also say how they support the children's skills, and sometimes teach them to start small business. Participants also speak about paid jobs for older children and how they keep their money for extra expenses. They never seem to use the money or activities of the children neither for profit nor for the sustenance of the orphanage. Participants also explain that older children perform paid jobs, and how they take care of their money for extras, but never to support themselves or the orphanage.

I did not see any evident signs of exploitation of the children at this orphanage.

**Research Question 4: What Characteristics can the Participants of This Orphanage and the Researcher Determine as Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care in This Institution to Achieve Best Practice?**

I based this question on Wolins’ (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care which follow.

**First Prerequisite: A Clear Value System**

The participants explained that they do not talk about spirituality to children directly, but some practices are taught to adolescents if they choose. Their clear system of values is explained in the following quote:

What we teach the children is nothing directly related to being spiritual, but just the basic values, like if you give you receive. Basic values that everyone would like to teach their kids but not always do. We don't lead the children to anything spiritual but in practice we teach them to take care of their things, to take care of their bodies. (Amanda)

Everybody at the orphanage is expected to be thoughtful about animals, younger children, or people who have special needs, as well as to avoid racism, and be open minded regarding other cultures. Another value lies in having and building proper relationships, always being honest about fairness.

Yeah, our value system, just basic . . . I mean, everything here is about honesty about fairness, about love . . . um, support, like acting like a proper, a proper family here, respect, um . . . those are like really, really, really important. And that's what the kids talk about each night . . . which makes them like really, really, really beautiful kids. (Eloy)

The main value is to act out of love and compassion:

The main values are love . . . compassion [...] Considering that all the staff members live in there and see it more than just a job but a way of life and a spiritual path, they all abide to the same philosophy and values. (Flora)

### **Second Prerequisite: A Committed Staff**

The orphanage has a very small team of nine people. They are always overloaded with work.

We are all very busy. The staff consists of only nine people including those who help with accounting and maintenance. All these staff are volunteers, and are provided only with basic needs. Other than these staff we have five paid employees. (Amanda)

Here is what Cristina explained:



All staff are volunteers, but some teachers are hired, as are a cook, cleaning person and maintenance workers who are under contract. One must have other activities, but our priority is to know how to educate children. (Cristina).

We don't hire staff. Most of us are here for personal growth and we stay and let this become our life. We are all volunteers. We have sponsors, family members or friends just as the children do, that help with our financial needs. (Cristina)

Commitment, as said by the participants, is of utmost importance. Equal ideals bond staff together but they said that what brings them together above all is the work and their equal commitment to serving others, improving themselves as individuals so that they can better serve others. Staff members thrive to have very proper relationships. Self-watching their behavior is constant for personal growth.

For our orphanage I think a big, big thing is that we help each other to become better people so the quality of what we can give the kids is better all the time. We always have really proper relationships with each other and we know each other in what we are missing; someone else may be stronger so we are constantly watching ourselves. (Cristina)

Occasionally, the staff gets extra help from volunteers from Mexico and other parts of the world that come and go.

“...We had many volunteers who were attracted to our greenhouse project or to the orphanage, but they were not yet committed to their own spiritual growth...”

(Amanda)

“...the volunteers that come and go get their chip at things ...” (Eloy)

### **Third prerequisite: Predictability for All Involved**

According to the staff, there are a lot of changes at the orphanage. They said that changes are for the better and that evolution is change:

Evolution is change, a perfect *ideal* situation may not be ideal because we are dealing with people and their emotions. All of us are in constant change. The

reasons for the changes are so that there is more predictability so the lives and structures of all staff and children are constantly improved. (Amanda)

We changed the classroom here to this side because there is more of us and we can have more control of the children. We can see them better. Some kids are really hard to control for some staff so that is why we don't have them in the regular school. They do better with other staff. It depends. So we have better control over here. (Dora)

They claim that what is predictable are the same values and beliefs, training and expectations, as well as nutrition and health care:

I would take predictability in a different way that what it is meant to be. We change a lot. So for externals it seems like there is no sense of predictability, but really the reasons for the changes are so that there is more and more predictability of more and more stable staff and more and more stable children so kind of like and it seems contradictory but it works for us, because we have obtained in these years a greater level of stability and predictability for staff and for children and there is a constant balance and I think there is only so much predictability you can have when there are so many people involved, because every individual needs to be taken into account and there are many individuals to be taken into account so it can't be too rigid because there are many people. (Cristina)

Here is what is important, according to Amanda: "They [meaning the staff] meet the requirements and wish to stay." (Amanda)

The most important predictability is that children know that they are here to stay for as long as they want. When they turn 18, it is in their hands. The emotional stability is enough so if they want to come back they can. (Amanda)

#### **Fourth prerequisite: A Setting Integrated with the Community**

The orphanage had a school that included children from the outside community and the orphanage children interacted with them. At this time that school is closed and in the orphanage school there are only orphanage children.

More and more the project is opening up to the community. There are volunteers, there are classes by members of the community, the children play soccer in the community and then invite members of the community to the project. (Flora)

The participant explained that there are weekly activities to receive children from the community. Children often visit and attend sports or recreational activities in the community, such as soccer training and games with a soccer league in the town. They also attend the Boy and Girl Scout's activities. There is a soccer team and children play outside often.

What's really nice is like especially most of our kids play in soccer teams in the town so they get to meet kids . . . we used to have outside kids at our school here, and we don't now, so they are able to make other friends that way. (Eloy)

There are sometimes transportation problems to take children out, because gas and car maintenance are expensive.

Before they had communication at the school, now I'm not sure. Sometimes they go out for walks to the mountains, the older children occasionally go to the movies in [the bigger city] and boys play in local soccer teams. (Betsy)

At the school, three or four times a week there were activities to receive the children from the outside community. (Flora)

Eloy said:

Friday nights we have like kind of this a social event for the week where some . . . the kids go to the *cancha* (play field in Spanish) and play soccer and in the indoor soccer facility and kids that they know from town and a lot of people come and you know we, we integrate them in every possible way that we can . . . sometimes we are limited because of transportation or transportation cost or time or something like that but all of that is encouraged from the earliest ages, because we have 5-year-olds on soccer teams from 5- to 20-year-olds here that play soccer in town because soccer is of course the biggest sport in Mexico. And if there is any cultural event or anything going on in town we always take the kids and so it's really nice.

The participants also said that some of the settlement houses are rented to community members who participate in the inner project activities.

### **Fifth Prerequisite: A healthy Influence From Peers**

According to the participants, relationships with peers are difficult to control at a regular school, because many children are academically deprived and others have not attended school before. Therefore, it has been better for them to study in a different environment.

Well, it depends, it depends on the child. I feel like most children are a positive influence, but obviously there are trouble makers that make other kids wild, but I think it's just normal . . . it's mostly positive, and especially with older kids, the older kids are a really good example for the younger ones. The teens are a really good example like they take care of the kids . . . (Dora)

The participants assured me that peers are very caring with younger children; they calm them and teach them what they have learned. They also said that most children in the orphanage are a positive influence:

“I feel like most children are a positive influence, but obviously there are trouble makers that make other kids wild, but I think it's just normal” (Amanda).

As I stated before, participants reported that during the evening communication meetings the children help resolve each other's issues.

Interviewees spoke about a program for adolescents with the intention to provide an opportunity for healthy relations among them:

“They have recently begun a program for teenagers aimed to keep a safe and healthy space for teenagers to have fun and meet each other” (Flora).

In the following quote, we can see the difficulties of the children in the relation with other peers at the regular school:

Our kids require a different type of attention, like if there are many kids in the classroom and there is a less controlled environment it's hard for them to concentrate. Like in the first years we did have most of our kids there but what happened is that after a few years we noticed that they were not learning much because the focus is constantly on the disciplining. They couldn't even get to the

academics and with us it's not like that anymore. At first it was...at first we could not even focus on education but at this point it's definitely more under control.  
(Cristina)

**Sixth Prerequisite. A Socially Constructive Engagement of Children and Their Participation in Useful Activities that Help Develop a Sense of Competence and Ownership, a Strong Character, and a Unique Personal Identity**

Participants reported that children volunteer in an array of activities: taking the compost to the chickens, taking care of dogs, doing other basic chores in the house, cooking, gardening and helping maintenance workers. There are also painting classes and different workshops carried out by volunteers, like arts and crafts, writing, musical instruments, dancing and air-dance choreography, and computing.

They have classes and spiritual workshops for adolescents if they choose to, as another constructive activity they can engage in. The best opportunity for this is, of course, the assemblies and evening meetings.

Ownership is shown in responsibilities for the orphanage community like spontaneously tutoring younger children. Also, children are encouraged to work on what they like.

. . . They are planning on expanding this program and having more activities for teenagers . . . The older teenagers are a good influence for the smaller kids. They have been there longer and have overcome certain things. They are calm and responsible and help the younger ones. They look up to the elders and take their example. If someone is about to start a tantrum or something like that, they speak to them and calm them and the young children react in a better way. They usually follow them. (Flora)

The children help in an array of activities, from helping with chores in the house, to cooking, to helping with the chickens and gardens to even doing a small part in some of the constructions (helping to carry a brick or lay a bit of cement, which little kids really like) . . . One of the teenagers who likes air dance choreographed her own air dance and showed younger children how to do the different movements. The choreography was presented in a Christmas event. (Flora)

At the homes, each home has chicken compost and the children will volunteer to take the compost to the chickens for them to eat, there are certain kids who absolutely love it so they specially ask for it. Some of the kids help feed the chickens. Other kids will take care of the dogs, like we have some basic chores like the middle kids, older kids help out with the chores in the house, and just basic chores. (Amanda)

One practice is that they don't allow them to feel sorry for themselves, or any other people to feel sorry for them and fostering the idea that they are responsible for their own life and they ultimately are the ones to choose what will happen with their lives. (Betsy)

**Interpretation.** The characteristics that the participants of this orphanage determine as prerequisites for efficient group care in this institution to achieve best practice follow:

Regarding the first prerequisite, a clear value system, the participants said that they do not talk to children about spirituality, but about basic values, taking care of their bodies and things, giving and taking care of others, opening their minds to other cultures, being honest and acting out of love and compassion. Regarding a committed staff, the main motivation seems to be their spiritual path. This makes their commitment stronger than if it were just any job. They make great efforts to have proper relations among them, mainly out of compassion and watching their own feelings and behavior. The third prerequisite, predictability for all involved, is addressed as changes that mean evolution. Participants refer to some things being predictable, like nutrition and health, as well as children knowing they are in the orphanage to stay. The fourth prerequisite seems to be fulfilled by several activities where children participate with the outer community. The fifth prerequisite regarding, peer influence, is found difficult in school for these children, but adolescents have a special program and teach younger children, the evening

communication meetings help them resolve issues. Children also learn to make the ones with special needs to feel loved.

The sixth prerequisite, a socially constructive engagement in useful activities to develop a sense of ownership and strong character, is carried out through many activities. Some of these are art workshops, responsibilities for the orphanage, and the encouragement of the children's preferences.

Children are dissuaded from self-pity. However, Dora said that this is not to strengthen the children's character but rather to teach them to master their own lives and dissuade them from seeing themselves as victims.

I will here end the interpretation of the views of the participants, and will now proceed to explain how I attempted to give validity to this research.

### **Validity**

Validity is understood as the assurance of credibility of the data collected for research. To assure validity, according to Denzin (1978), there are several types of procedures. One of these is to bring together different data collection sources. For data this study, I only used interviews for data collection. Member checking is another good way to assure that what has been collected is valid. Thus, to assure validity of my data I did a member checking procedure. In this case, someone who had authority to give the data as an informant reviewed and confirmed whether the information coincides with what the participants meant to provide as data.

Dora, as the person responsible for public relations of the orphanage, was the one who offered to check the information given as an essential summary. Before I finished

analyzing results, I made a list of the main results as a synthesis. This list was presented to Dora to check and she made a few changes. This procedure is presented as Table 1 (in Chapter Four, page 118). In the left column is the list the way I sent it to Dora. In the right column is the same list with Dora's changes that appear underlined, expressing what she thinks is closer to their view. After this member checking, Dora added the following paragraph to the overall conclusions, stressing on the fact that they are a family for the children:

Mostly our spirituality is spirituality in action, which is loving and caring for others. But most important is that we really take our children as our own and give them a family and home for life, and it's the family structure that really changes them the most. It's having a mother who has so taken them and loves them and they feel so loved that really changes them the most and has the most impact on each of their lives, because it doesn't just last until 18, a real mother is a guide and teacher for life too. That is something that many people don't even have with their blood parents and it is something that we really strive to give each child here and what is most important in their total transformation as human beings and in transforming the trajectory their life takes later on as adults. (Dora).

Looking at Table 1 (page 118), it is important to remember that Dora is only one of the participants, and she may have slight discrepancies with her colleagues.

Nevertheless, Dora is the person in charge of public relations. In general terms, we can see that the synthesis I made from the responses seems correct to her, and our differences in terms of the interpretation of the tendencies within the orphanage are minimal. In any case, these are Dora's last corrections and her views are what I am taking into account for the last part of the interpretation of the collected data. I am also taking her last paragraphs as reference. One paragraph is the very last one of the list, where she specifies that not letting the children feel sorry for themselves is not referring to strong character



but to help them be masters of their life. The other one is stated above where Dora clarifies their spirituality in action and their being a family for the children.

### **Interpretation of findings**

In Chapter Three I explained the Stages for Analysis I used to analyze the results of this research following Byrman's Coding Stages (2008) explained by Gibbs (2007, 2009).

I present the first three stages and the examples given in Appendix D, where I show how I set a color code for each of the questions of the instrument used for the interviews. I then transcribed all the responses to the interviews given by the participants by research question. In Stage 2, I did a manual search for the main themes, giving a weight number from five to ten to chunks of texts, and attaching a name to each one. I also identified general ideas with color pens. In coding Stage 3, I identified the themes that seemed more emphasized, repeated or that called my attention given their significance for the research objectives, thus, to answer the research questions.

These stages could have been much more sophisticated if I had decided to search for deeper meanings of relationships, metaphors, giving more importance to body language, and so on. However, this kind of interpretation could attempt against the mere statements that the participants were offering. Nonetheless, to analyze the themes in Chapter Five, I included some facts such as the seemingly missing connection with the psychologist, the apparent avoidance of sexual issues, the not signing the consent by some of the staff, the constant reference to the founder, and a few others, included in the interview itself, such as pauses, and some contradictions noted during the interviews.

As said before, examples of the first three stages are provided in Appendix D.

Now I will present Data Analysis Stage 4 (Byrman, 2008; Gibbs, 2007) the retrieval of categories that yields the interpretation of findings of this research.

In this final Stage, I set the list of all the themes that came up during the research from my manual search in Stage 3. This list can be seen in Table 1 in the left column. The list in this left column is what I sent to Dora for revision, as a member check to give validity to this study. From Dora's response registered in the second column, I identified the general main themes by finding the most frequently mentioned ones in that list.

Table 1

## GENERAL RESULTS AND MEMBER CHECK OF RESULTS

### *Member Check of Research Results*

Member check of research results with Dora who is in charge of public relations at the orphanage. Dora's changes are underlined in the second column.

Data Collected before Member Check  
underlined)

Data after Member Check (changes are

### **Research question 1:** How do participants of the orphanage view their work?

1 Leadership: The view, philosophy, messages and guidance come from the founder.

1 Leadership. The view, philosophy, messages and guidance come from the founder.

2 The view of a spiritual path and a sustainable project. Part of a family. A life path.

2 The view of a spiritual path and a sustainable project. Part of a family. A life path.

3 A healthy way of living with proper nutrition.

3 A healthy way of living with proper nutrition.

4 Working towards a higher level of spirituality.

4 Working towards a higher level of spirituality.

5 Sustainable and spiritual project beyond the orphanage.

5 Sustainable and spiritual project beyond the orphanage.

6 Mutual help, respectful relationships.

6 Mutual help, respectful relationships.

**Research Question 2:** Based on the participants' expressed opinions what were the organizational challenges and opportunities when setting up and now administering this institution?

**Organizational opportunities:**

1 Desire to help children and youth.

2 Financial assets to buy land.

3 Opportunity to heal physically, emotionally, spiritually.

4 Contacts, sponsorships (personal and through internet).

5 Volunteer programs.

**Organizational opportunities:**

1 Desire to help children and youth.

2 Financial assets to buy land.

3 Opportunity to heal marginalized sectors of society physically, emotionally, spiritually.

4 Contacts, sponsorships (personal and through internet).

5 Volunteer programs.

**Organizational challenges:**

1 Frustration from trying to teach proper nutrition to children in the surrounding poor community.

2 Legal procedures to receive children.

3 Children in bad health state, under heavy medications. Some handicapped.

4 Getting the right parents for the children.

5 Bureaucracy and other problems with *DIF* Keeping siblings together. Children should be sent to stay, not temporarily.

6 Financial: Maintaining numbers, getting sponsorships.

**Organizational challenges:**

1 Frustration in trying to teach proper nutrition and improve the future lives of children in the surrounding poor community.

2 Legal procedures.

3 Children in bad health state, under heavy medications. Some children are disabled.

4 Getting the right parent for the children.

5 Bureaucracy with *DIF* (National Welfare Agency). Asking to keep siblings together and that children should be sent to stay, not temporarily.

6 Financial. Maintaining healthy numbers, getting sponsorships

7 Schooling for academically deprived children. Training teachers

7 Schooling for academically deprived children. Training teachers.

8 Proper administration.

8 Proper administration.

**Research Question 3:** What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding the four selected human rights of the child (to nutrition and health care, to be protected from further victimization, to free expression and participation, and to not be exploited)?

### The right to nutrition and health care

#### Nutrition

1 Nutrition is the highest priority. Strictly vegetarian, based on specific nutritional principles written by the founder.

1 Nutrition, highest priority. Strictly vegetarian, based on specific nutritional principles written compiled, practiced and taught by the founder.

2 No combination of protein and carbohydrates. Very little carbohydrates (no sweets, little fruits, no wheat).

2 No combination of protein and carbohydrates. Very little carbohydrates. (No sweets, little fruits, no wheat.) Very little fat.

3 Mostly raw vegetables, eggs, legumes, few corn *tortillas*, almost no dairy products.

3 Mostly raw vegetables, eggs, fruits, grains, fresh and dried legumes, few corn *tortillas*, almost no dairy products.

4 Children who were medicated leave medication through proper nutrition.

4 Children who were medicated are able to go off medication through proper nutrition.

5 Teenagers can eat whatever they want once their immune system is strong enough.

5 Older teenagers are free to eat as they choose, within some guidelines, once their immune system is strong enough.

6 Staff follow the same specific diet.

6 Staff follow the same special diet.

#### Health care

1 Healing for most illnesses comes mainly from the founder's guidance and help.

2 All staff follow the same spiritual path which has healed many of them too.

3 *Specific spiritual* practices are taught to teens.

4 Prescription medications are avoided as much as possible, but if children need medication, (usually upon arrival) they are seen by an allopathic doctor or in case it is necessary taken to the State Children's Hospital, but then healed within the orphanage with proper nutrition, sometimes homeopathy.

5 Someone is always with a child who is ill.

6 If a child is sick, no mucus forming food, such as carbohydrates and dairy products.

7 Diet is tailored for sick children.

8 Nutrition and health are central part of the staff's work.

9 There is a problem with water supply. Sometimes water must be bought. There are rain water recipients.

10 There is dental care including orthodontics and sight revision for all children, twice a year

10 There are records of all children but many are incomplete due to the conditions they came from.

11 Precautions: proper nutrition and isolating ill children who may be contagious.

1 Healing for most illnesses comes mainly from the founder's guidance. There is very little illness, so only the most basic care is required mostly.

2 All staff follow the same spiritual path guidelines which has healed even chronic illness.

3 *Specific spiritual* practices are taught to teens if they choose.

4 Prescription medications are avoided as much as possible, but if children need medication, (usually upon arrival) they are seen by an allopathic doctor or in case it is necessary taken to the State Children's Hospital, but then healed within the orphanage with proper nutrition, sometimes homeopathy.

5 Someone is always with a child who is ill.

6 If a child is sick, no mucus forming food, such as carbohydrates and dairy product are given.

7 Diet is tailored for sick children.

8 Nutrition and health are central part of the staff's work.

9 There is a problem with water supply. Sometimes water must be bought. There are rainwater captivation systems.

10 There is dental care including orthodontics and sight revision for all children twice a year.

10 There are past records of all children. Many are incomplete due in part to the conditions they came from, or members of their families being unknown.

11 Precautions: proper nutrition, isolating ill children who may be contagious.

---

### The right to protection from further victimization

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1 Children are taught not to feel sorry for themselves nor allow others to feel sorry for them.

2 Tantrums and bad-temper fits are cut on the moment.

3 Sexual abuse and other traumas are spoken out in night meetings to get support. They get sexual education in these meetings when necessary.

4 Problems with relationships are resolved by the parents, addressed in meetings or taken to the founder who is "like everybody's mother."

5 For some children, the Welfare Agency (DIF) requires the visit of a psychologist chosen by the orphanage.

6 The founder works with children who have special needs. She has a lot of experience. There is not one treatment that works for all children, it depends on each case.

7 Clear consequences for different behaviors. Clear structure and schedule.

8 Respect for the specific characteristics of each child.

9 Warnings, consequences. Putting conflicts in their hands.

10 Discipline through consequence system.

1 Children are taught not to feel sorry for themselves nor allow others to feel sorry for them.

2 Tantrums and bad-temper fits are cut in the moment.

3 Sexual abuse and other traumas are spoken about with the psychologist or with their parent, who is also each child's closet confident. Sex education in these meetings when necessary.

4 Problems resolved by the parents if not fixed in general meeting or taken to the founder who is like "everybody's mother." Communication meetings weekly to improve interactions, relationships and foster the habit of speaking out when they do not feel anything is fair or anyone is not behaving.

5 For some children, the National Welfare Agency (DIF) requires the visit of a psychologist chosen by the orphanage.

6 The founder has worked extensively with children, including those who have special needs. There is not one treatment that works for all children; it depends on each case.

7 Clear consequences for different behaviors. Clear structure and schedule.

8 Respect for the specific characteristics of each child.

9 Warnings, consequences. Fostering taking responsibility for themselves.

10 Discipline through a positive motivational system and if necessary, negative consequence system. Taking responsibility for one's actions is of primary importance.

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### The right to free expression and participation

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Assemblies, night meetings at every home.                                       | 1. Assemblies, <u>daily/weekly</u> meetings at every home.   |
| 2 If they have many problems with a parent they may ask to be changed.             | 2 If they have many problems with a parent they may ask to be changed.                                   |
| 3 Learning to speak in a positive way to be more confident of their communication. | 3 <u>To learn to speak their mind in a positive forthright way.</u>                                      |
| 4 Encouraging children to be open.   | 4 Encouraging children to be open <u>in a positive, forthright way, to have confident communication.</u> |
| 5 Opportunities for artistic expression  | 5 Opportunities for artistic expression.   |
| 6 Open doors. Freedom to stay or leave.  | 6 Open doors. Freedom to stay or leave.  |
- 

### The right to not be exploited

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Children have to do basic home chores and basic self-care, except when they are very young.   | 1 Children do basic home chores and self-care, except when very young.   |
| 2 Children are encouraged to do what really want to, by giving them books and tutoring on their skills.                                       | 2 Children are encouraged to <u>pursue careers and interests by giving them books, opportunities to develop their interests and tutoring in their skills.</u>  |
| 3 Sometimes small manufacture businesses are encouraged so children learn from that experience.   | 3 Sometimes small manufacture businesses are encouraged so children learn from that experience.  |
| 4 Older boys participate in building and other tasks and are paid for with money kept by parents for them to buy something they need or want. | 4 Older boys participate in building and other tasks and are paid for with money kept by parents for them to buy something they need or want.  |
| 5 Children help with chickens, cropping, watering the orchard and other general chores they enjoy.  | 5 <u>Older</u> children help with chickens, cropping, watering the orchard and other general <u>and occasional cleanup of the grounds for a few hours.(1-2 Saturdays a month) and their daily home chores-</u> |
| 6 Children help with school clean-up.   | 6 Children help with school <u>cleanup.</u>  |

7 If a child wants to, he or she may take care of younger kids. It is never an obligation.

7 If a child wants to, he or she may take care of younger children. It is never an obligation.

8 Money to sustain the orphanage or other purposes other than formative does not come from children's labor.

8 Money to sustain the orphanage or purposes other than formative does not come from children's labor.

---

**Research Question 4:** What characteristics can the participants of this orphanage and the researcher determine as prerequisites for efficient group care (PEGC) in this institution to achieve best practice?

I based this question on Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care (PEGC) which are:

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**First prerequisite: A clear value system.**

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1 Children are not directly taught about spirituality. Clear values are the following:

1 Children are not directly taught about spirituality. Clear values are the following:

2 If you give you receive

2 What you give you receive

3 Taking care of their bodies and their things.

3 Taking care of their bodies and their things.

4 To eliminate if you have too much.

4 To eliminate if you have too much, and give to others more in need.

5 To take care of animals, of younger children, or of children who have special needs.

5 To take care of animals, of younger children, or of people who have special needs.

6 To avoid racism, and to be open minded before other cultures.

6 To avoid racism, and to be open minded before other cultures.

7 To have proper relationships.

7 To have proper relationships.

8 Adults are watching themselves as parents and staff.

8 The adults are self-observing and constantly critiquing and working to improve themselves as parents and staff.



9 To be honest about fairness.

9 To be honest about fairness.

10 To act out of love and compassion.

10 To act out of love and compassion.

### **Second prerequisite: A committed staff.**

1 Small team of nine people. Always too busy, overloaded with work.

1 Small team of nine people. Always too busy, overloaded with work.

2 No hiring. All are volunteers. There are a few workers under contract.

2 All staff-parents are volunteers. Some teachers are hired, as are a cook, cleaning person and maintenance workers who are under contract.

3 More than commitment, there is a spiritual engagement.

3 Commitment is of utmost importance. Like ideals such as commitment to serving others and improving themselves bond staff together.

4 Training in special, nutrition and *specific spiritual practices* are required.

4 Nutrition and *specific spiritual practices* are required for health care to work.

5 Very proper relationships and self-watching are constant for personal growth.

5 Very proper relationships and self-watching are constant for personal growth.

6 Extra help from volunteers that come and go is constant.

6 Occasionally, extra help comes from volunteers.

### **Third prerequisite: Predictability for all involved.**

1 There are a lot of changes but for the better. Evolution is change.

1 There are a lot of changes but for the better. Evolution is change.

2 The reasons for the changes are so that there is more predictability.

2 The reasons for the changes are so that there is more predictability and the lives are improved. A predictable outcome is that all changes are for the better.

3 Same values and beliefs, training and expectations are predictable.

3 Same values and beliefs, training and expectations are predictable.

4 Nutrition and health care are predictable

4 Nutrition and health care are predictable.

5 Children know that they are here to stay for as long as they want. After 18 if they meet requirements.

5 Children know that they are here to stay for as long as they want. After 18 if they meet requirements and wish to stay.

---

**Fourth prerequisite: A setting integrated with the community.**

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1 In the school there are children from the outside community. Children interact with them.

1 [When there was a] school, there were children from the outside community. Children interacted with them.

2 There are often activities to receive children from the community.

2 There are weekly activities to receive children from the community.

3 Children often visit and attend cultural activities in the community. There is a soccer team and children play outside often.

3 Children visit and attend sports or recreational activities in the community, such as training and games with a soccer league in the town and attending the Boy and Girl Scouts.

4 There are some houses rented to community members who participate in the inner project activities.

4 Houses are rented to community members who participate in the inner project activities

5 There are some transportation problems to take children out.

5 There are some transportation limitations to take children out, as gas and car maintenance are expensive.

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**Fifth prerequisite: A healthy influence from peers.**

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1 Relations with peers are difficult to control at regular school because many children are academically deprived and many have not attended school before, so it has been better for them to study in a different environment.

1 Relationships with peers are difficult to control at regular school; children are academically deprived and many have not attended school before. They study in a different environment.

2 Teens are very caring with younger children; they calm them and teach them what they have learned.

2 Teens are very caring with younger children; they calm them and teach them what they have learned.

3 In the night communication meetings they help resolve each other's issues.

3 In the night communication meetings they help resolve each other's issues.

4 There is a program for teens to keep a healthy opportunity to have good relations among them.

4 There is a program for teens to keep a healthy opportunity to have good relations among them.

5 Children are taught to help the ones with special needs to feel loved and overcome previous rejections.

5 Children help the ones with special needs to feel loved and overcome previous rejections.

---

**Sixth prerequisite: A socially constructive engagement of children and their participation in useful activities that help develop a sense of competence and ownership, a strong character, and a unique personal identity.**

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1 Children volunteer in an array of activities: to take the compost to the chickens, take care of dogs, other basic chores in the house, cooking, gardens and helping maintenance workers.

1 Children volunteer in an array of activities: to take the compost (sic, meaning food leftovers) to the chickens, take care of dogs, other basic chores in the house, cooking, gardening and helping maintenance workers.

2 Painting classes. Different workshops carried out by volunteers, like arts and crafts, writing, musical instruments, dancing and air-dance choreography, computing.

2 Painting classes. Workshops, like arts and crafts, painting, writing, music, dancing, computing.

3 Special classes and special spiritual workshops for teens.

3 Specific spiritual practices and spiritual workshops for teens.

4 Assemblies, night meetings.

4 Assemblies, night meetings.

5 Responsibilities for the orphanage community and tutoring younger kids.

5. Responsibilities for the orphanage community and tutoring younger children.

6 Children are encouraged to work on what they like.

6 Children are encouraged to work on what they like.

7 Children are dissuaded from self-pity or accepting others to feel sorry for them. Some say it is to strengthen character, but during member check this final comment was provided by Dora:

7 No, this is not to strengthen their character it is: To teach children they are the master of their own lives and happiness no matter what happens to them, how they are affected depends on how they take it and how much responsibility they take for themselves and how they respond to life, so they are taught to not see themselves as victims of life.

---

Looking at Table 1, I found the frequency of the identified themes in this research which I now pose in Table 2.

The most repeated words found through the list of Table 1 (page 118), were related with nutrition and health. In the following Table (Table 2) I marked these themes with (\*). The themes I marked with (i) are related to spirituality and personal spiritual growths which are the other most mentioned ones in Table 1. The themes related to being a family, which was emphasized by Dora in her review, are marked by me with (#). These marks helped me to visualize the numbers of themes that were related and cluster them together.

Table 2

#### FREQUENCY OF IDENTIFIED THEMES

Name of most frequent themes identified in interviews:	Frequency
1. nutrition, food, eating	45(*)
2. specific spiritual practices	38(i)
3. health, healthcare	34(*)
4. love	30(#)
5. spiritual, spirituality, personal (spiritual) growth	30(i)
6. needs	22(#)
7. education	19(#)
8. philosophy	15(i)
9. family	15(#)

10. relationships	13(#)
11. responsibility	13(#)
12. beautiful (meaning spiritual beauty of children)	11(#)

---

The frequency of these marked themes led me to consider the possible general categories that could then be identified for the Data Analysis, Stage 4 (Byrman, 2008; Gibbs, 2007). In order to identify those categories and give them another name, as Byrman (2008) and Gibbs (2007) suggested, I thought about the themes that had relation or importance to each other and gave them the specific marks given above, in Table 2. This is why I marked with different signs the number that corresponds to the frequency of each theme.

The table where I name the categories is Table 3, which is seen below:

Table 3

#### CLUSTERING ITEMS TO EXTRACT MAIN CATEGORIES

Clustered items from Table 2	Addition of theme's frequencies	Name of Overall Category
Love, needs, education, family, relationships, responsibility, beautiful. (marked with (#) in Table2)	123	Giving a family to the children.
Spirituality, specific spiritual practices and, philosophy, personal (spiritual) growth. (Marked with (i) in Table 2)	83	Spirituality in action.
Nutrition, food, health care.(Marked with(*) in Table2)	79	Nutrition-based health care.

---

Table 3 yields the following main categories that I have identified from the data analysis:

- A. Giving a family to sheltered children.
- B. Spirituality in action.
- C. Nutrition-based health care.

The categories mentioned above are the ones I analyzed more in depth in Chapter Five. I looked at the work of the participants as they view it in relation to the theoretical framework given in Chapter Two and other additional theoretical considerations.

Before I finish this Chapter Four, I will acknowledge some of the limitations that I consider are now evident in this piece of research.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The main limitation of this study is that it refers to the view and opinion of the participants only. Interviewees can be expected to keep problems, major drawbacks and mistakes to themselves in the intuitional desire to present the best image. This is easy to understand, and probably the best for the health of the orphanage and their children. Nevertheless, being present and noticing details that imply contradictions between what is being said and what you see is conflictive. This is a limitation of the study as well. In pursuing my purpose of learning about the building and management of one of the orphanages with apparently good results in Mexico, the fact that major information may be concealed is detrimental to my learning.

This orphanage shelters between 25 and 30 children, depending on the ones who reach adulthood and the new children they get. Such a small orphanage is not the most

exemplary of the problematic situations an orphanage in Mexico may confront. To serve the children who are being neglected, maltreated, exploited, abandoned or left without a family by the “narco war” in Mexico, an orphanage ought to serve at least 200 children. Among other obstacles, the National Welfare is limiting its budget, which is putting the aid for childhood still more at risk. This is expected to worsen in the future and children are certainly the most vulnerable when budgets for their care are disrupted through politics. Thus, a larger and comparative study of the budget limitations that affect efficient group care is necessary.

On the other hand, the orphanage of this study is run by foreigners who have contacts and sponsoring from the U.S. and other countries; something that few Mexican orphanages may have. This means that not all placements enjoy the same privileges as this one. This research results are not generalizable; however, the story may be informative and transferable to compare to other orphanages.

Thus, this case study is not representative. However, representativeness was not one of my aims, but learning how an orphanage can be run respecting some basic rights of the children and fulfilling the prerequisites of efficient group care that had been established in the field by thorough previous researchers like Wolins (1974) and Payne and White (1979).

Another important limitation is the following. Being that the Convention of the Human Rights of the Child considers the vulnerable circumstance of the child, and in an orphanage like the one I studied children are especially vulnerable, other rights of the children should be studied and are not looked at here, especially when they might have

been as important and maybe not so respected and pursued in this orphanage as the ones studied. Some of these rights might have been the right to an identity, the right to a special education, or the right to a family meaning the child's right to be adopted by a regular family.

Other limitations may be found by the reader, which I would appreciate to know about.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I elaborate on the themes I identified from the interview responses, considering them in the theoretical frames found in the literature review in Chapter Two and other more recent references.

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to learn from an orphanage that seems to be achieving a successful protection of children deprived of their family in Mexico. Through the views and reported experience of the manager and five staff members of this orphanage, I explored two main subjects related to the caring of children in the institution: First, four human rights of the children, selected from the United Nations' International Convention on the Rights of the Child; and second, delving into Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group together with the participants.

As stated before, I gathered four interviews during my visits to the orphanage during 10 months in 2012 and afterwards I obtained two more interviews in 2014 and 2015. Before I began these visits I was requested to teach and help some of the children in order to compensate for the time the staff and manager spent with me during the interviews.

From the data analysis I identified three main categories. The participants of the orphanage view their work as based on providing a family to the sheltered children, spirituality in action and nutrition-based health care. Thus, these are the main Categories:

- Category A: Providing a family to sheltered children
- Category B: Spirituality in action
- Category C: Nutrition-based health care

In this chapter, I analyze and discuss these themes in more detail. The main Categories were identified with capital letters A, B, and C in order to address them when they are pertinent within the discussion of each Research Questions, and are found interwoven in the following analysis.

### **Research Question 1: How do Participants of the Orphanage View Their Work?**

The spiritual philosophy (Category B) seems to be what is most appreciated by the staff of this orphanage as they follow the lead of Alma, their founder and director. The words related to spirituality are found 83 times in the participants' responses. This can be pictured as a central idea which comes from Alma, the founder and director. It is also an expectation of values for the children, although not explicitly displayed. Amanda and Dora (2012) both said that they never even talk about spirituality to children, but try to show it everyday actions. This orphanage differs from others in that the staff's intention was not specifically to care for children, but to search for spiritual personal growth (Category B). Furthermore, for this or other services at the setting they are not paid. However, many orphanages base their work on spiritual and/or religious principles more than specific training for child care. There is an initiative that has begun to study this interesting matter (Faith to Action, 2014).

### **On the Background of Participants**

The beginning of Research Question 1 refers to previous experience of the staff. Regarding credentials of the staff, I had clear information, but I decided to omit this information here to protect their identity. However, I can say that these credentials except for Alma, the founder and director, are not a direct preparation for caring and treating previous traumas of children deprived of family. In the studies and preparation of the staff we can only see the importance given to nutrition and specific practice related to the particular philosophy of the organization. The interviewed participants constantly refer to Alma; they say she guides everyone when there is a problem. Alma studied psychology and education, and also had experience working in a foreign third-world country. Thus she may be held as having the curriculum that is needed when providing professional care for children deprived of family.

The notion that only academics or experts should make decisions for children has been discarded by Wolins (1974) as well as by the Innocenti Research reports (2003). Wolins was preoccupied with the fact that relying only on professional advice may lead to a lack of ability to develop rearing methods and ideas, thus paralyzing creative possibilities. It could be argued as a counterpart that the lack of reference to studies and experiences of best practice means that the staff can only rely on their own resources and experiences, which may be influenced by neurotic or repetitive patterns (Freud, 1916/1878). Parents are usually untrained and spontaneously make decisions based on their own childhood, circumstances and feelings. Institutional caregivers, on the other hand, are specifically attempt to discuss and find the best possibilities for the children regardless of their training and upbringing. In this orphanage, Alma is their professional

reference, and according to her answers, the staff-parents have a set of rules and methods that have been established by her.

As stated by the Innocenti Research Centre (2003), both academic and local ways of working are valid, and there is a need for a dialogue between the two strands for mutual learning. However, for such dialogue important facets must be taken into account. Staff motivation and training, incentives, a good working environment, materials and resources, and a salary in line with the worker's functions, competence and outside opportunities are fundamental (Innocenti Research Centre, 2003).

In the studied orphanage, the staff is obviously not motivated by the salary but by a self-image of high spiritual growth (Category B).

It may be concluded that in spite of the fact that most of the staff members do not have any academic training, they do have the motivation to learn; within the limitation that Alma is their only trainer and academic reference. The staff members do not have time or apparent interest to find other advice unless it is required by the *DIF (Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia)* National Welfare Agency. However, as it may be inferred from the distance they take from the psychologist's work, the staff members do not have much respect for this psychologist's recommendations. These children are clearly at risk and ought to have special treatments beyond "normal" parenting. When discussing the right to protection from further victimization this matter takes higher relevance.

**Research Question 2: Based on the Participant's Expressed Opinions, What Were the Organizational Challenges and Opportunities When Setting Up and now Managing This Institution?**

The desire of the founder and Amanda to help children and youth is seen as a first opportunity to start the orphanage. The founder had the financial assets and was able to buy a 10-hectare piece of land where the orphanage is situated. As stated before, many of the staff members have seen the project itself as an opportunity to heal themselves (Category C) and also to physically, emotionally and spiritually (Category B) heal other people, especially the more marginalized sectors of society (children, the disabled and the sick). When the participants viewed joining this orphanage as becoming part of a family (Category A), we can conclude the following:

The right to a family was not included among the selected human rights of the child, but it is obvious that this is a right that an ideal orphanage would try to include. In this case, this right to a family (Category A) is something the organizers have been committed to from the beginning, as Flora has stated.

Some of the staff raises their own child at the orphanage with the rest of the children. This shows coherence in the attitude of having orphaned or abandoned children as their real family (Category A). There are other orphanages where the staff's children were not allowed to be in the orphanage. Children of managers or workers who live there have privileges and are treated in a manner that distinguishes them from those residents who have been deprived of their family. Regarding this, I had two different experiences in other orphanages. In one of these, children of the staff had a different status and even if they lived there, they slept in a separate room with their parents. They had this privileged treatment that let everyone know they were not deprived of family like "them" who were in a lesser status. In another orphanage, the daughter of an "auntie" in an SOS Kinderdorf

had been educated to be an “older sister” and to assume that she would “help her mother take care of sadder children.”

As a contrast, in the studied orphanage of this research, there is a special effort to stress an equal approach to the rearing and education of the staff's own children.

Nevertheless, the staff's biological children living with their foster siblings, have a definite advantage over other children, as they still have a biological parent with them and have never been abandoned, abused or maltreated the way other children have. New questions for further research may be asked about how to manage relations among this kind of siblings who live in an institution because their parents are part of the staff.

One of the challenges identified in this organization was getting the right “parents” for the children (Category A). To be parents the staff is required to be committed people not only for the sheltered children but for their own personal spiritual growth (Category B). These people are expected to be absolute volunteers. People with the social and financial resources to assume such a responsibility without receiving a salary are not easy to find. Evidently, this spiritual center attracted the individuals who now compose their staff. Nonetheless, could this be a requirement to recruit staff-parents for other institutions like this one?

Another question to ask would be: Are the staff-parents really parents or only staff? Or do they play both roles at the same time? In the interviews, they address themselves as staff and only speak about being parents when referring to children. However, they do not speak in the first person.

Who is whose mother is never very clear, and evidently older boys do not really have a “mother” (Category A). The participants say children have the right to “change parents”. In this case “parents” means only a “mother” for any of the girls and very young boys, and only a “father” for older boys. Thus boys don’t really have a choice since Eloy is the only male.

All staff members have a number of tasks that do not involve children. Managing, public relations, and sometimes cleansing tasks are not always differentiated from education and rearing, which may lead to confusion. Instead of being fully in charge of the children, most of them have several responsibilities. For example, Dora does the accounting and public relations. Eloy in addition to rearing all the boys also helps with managing tasks and the environmental project.

Families of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just as these staff members, also have to face several tasks at the same time. Modern parents must deal with work, management of their welfare, housekeeping, and taking manifold decisions in everyday life, just as the staff-parents in this orphanage have to do. Thus, working and living a regular life have to be seen against the background of the historical changes that have led to some extent to the neglect of the new generations of children. This matter was first approached in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Broder, 2002). Should mothers—or both parents today—take a job? Should they leave their children's rearing in someone else's hands? Questions like these are still relevant.

The presence of other paid workers means that those who they call “staff” are only the official caretakers of the children. These other workers are present and they

might only be committed because they are paid, and they live close by, in a place and time where jobs are scarce, but they are not considered “staff.” Another new question to ask would be: How relevant is the coupling of their work with the rearing of the children?

Senge (2003) pointed out the importance of the satisfaction of the people who are involved as part of the process of an organization. This coincides with the approach presented by Brown and Yoshioka's (2003) in reference to commitment of the staff to the organization, which would in this case be the orphanage. This satisfaction also comes from the idea of them having been healed (Category C) both physically and spiritually (Category B) by joining the organization. Specific spiritual practices (Category B) and proper nutrition contribute to a healthy lifestyle (Category C) and help the children's parents work towards a higher level of spirituality (Category B).

In this last paragraph we can notice the tight relation between Categories B, (spirituality) and Category C, (nutrition and healthcare), within this orphanage.

Something else should be taken into consideration regarding life as a family (Category A): Only Betsy and Flora spoke in the third person, saying “they”, instead of “us” or “we” as if they did not belong to the staff group. The differentiation of “we” and “they” is referred to by Shireman (2003) when addressing the problem of legitimation in settings like the Kibbutz or certain religious organizations in which children were separated from their biological families as a result of their families' “selfishness, inter-generational conflicts, or cultural backwardness” (p. 119 ). In the case of the studied orphanage, these two women seem to want to be differentiated for some reason from the rest of the participants. Is there a legitimacy issue they are feeling? In Flora's case it is



easy to explain given that she no longer works at the orphanage, and has some criticisms, but in Betsy's case it is surprising. Perhaps she does not perceive herself as a member of the “higher level staff,” that Flora mentioned once, and she may not feel as involved in spite of having being a member for years and having had her own child grow up there.

As a conclusion, I would like to state that the idea of being a family (Category A) is close to being fulfilled in the orphanage. However, being a family, in spite of all the good values it may echo, also brings neurosis (Freud, 1916/1978) and complications, which group-care institutions have tried to prevent and overcome, as Wolins (1974) has pointed out. Thus, there is more involved than just being family when carrying out and running an organization like this one.

### **Complexity of the Organization of the Orphanage**

In order to understand the complexity (Morin, 2008) of this organization as well as the coupling between its administration and educational functions (Fussarelli, 2002), it is necessary to look at the challenges involved in building and sustaining this orphanage. The staff said the main challenges were: compliance with Mexican legal procedures, financial needs, and schooling and administration. I will analyze them here:

**Compliance with legal procedures.** When the organizers decided to start the project, their first challenge was complying with the legal procedures that the *Sistema para el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia* (DIF), which is the National Welfare Agency, demanded of them to be able to receive children. In addition, it is very difficult to deal with the bureaucracy in Mexico, and the tribulations they have confronted are many. It is always a merit to overcome this challenge for all orphanages, especially in countries

where there have been terrible abuses through institutions like this one in detriment of their reputation. On the other hand, there are corrupt authorities that put pressure on anyone they can. In order to obtain extortion money they give little or no support to this high service for the social well-being of the children.

**Finances.** Possibly, the most challenging issue has been the financial problem, maintaining healthy numbers, and getting sponsorships for the children. In poor countries, the financial issue is always a challenge for any welfare institution. Though Mexico is no longer considered a poor country, inequality prevails in a dramatic way and corruption is perhaps the most important challenge these institutions face. Corrupted authorities only make decisions for their own profit. It is difficult for an orphanage to deal with such decisions.

The *Red Latino Americana de Acogimiento Familiar* (Latin American Net of Family Shelter) (RELAF, 2011) reported that there are 29,310 children deprived of their family living in 703 institutions. These numbers are very similar to those of the year 2000 census of the National Geography and Statistics Institute of Mexico (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática, 2003): of 675 shelters of different kinds with 28,107 children, of which 96 were public and 540 were private. Such numbers do not seem close to the reality of war and migration that went on during those 11 years. There is something unclear regarding the existence and furthermore, the conditions of children in orphanages and shelters in Mexico:

[. . .] countless children are placed in shelters or protection centers indefinitely, some without the proper procedures or constitutional warranties, which disregards their elementary human rights. The measures of admission that are applied by the Ministry of Family Adolescence and Childhood ought to be transitory, but due to

lack of follow-up become indefinite and children thus become adults in these centers. The prolonged stay of children in hospices, most of them having families, is a clear indicator that there has not been enough work with families and that alternative measures to institutionalization have not been applied. (RELAF, 2011, p. 18) (trans. L.Q.)

However, in this as in other cases, if and when orphanages are solvent, it is due to creative resources. For example, personal sponsors may donate on a first impulse but are not committed in the long run. Orphanages also may benefit from fund-raising initiatives such as sales, concerts, or other supportive actions organized by artists and altruistic people. In this particular case, donors may be moved by their spiritual philosophy (Category B). Donations come to orphanages also from publicity to promote awareness of the project; word of mouth recommendations from visitors who have enjoyed a tour of the setting, and so on. Unfortunately, news about terrifying scandals in orphanages (Martínez, 2010, Nájjar 2015) often prevent donors and philanthropic organizations to help support well intended institutions.

**Schooling.** Another challenge that families as well as institutions confront is schooling. Many of these children had never been to school or had been academically deprived before coming to the orphanage. Training teachers for this has also been a complex task. Pedagogically speaking it is not recommended to spontaneously teach what you know or what your intuition tells you. In this case, proficiency is definitively necessary, and there is an evident lack of professional development in this organization. They have noticed that many of their children do not do well in school. It is important to remember that learning disabilities do not come only from mental limitations, but are related to the children's general health and nutritional intake (Category C), as well as their

emotional and social wellbeing. These themes are discussed regarding the selected human rights of the child.

**Administration.** The orphanage seems to have difficulties organizing a proper administration, having noticeable disorganization in some areas, but the participants don't relate this to their vertical structure. Only Flora, the one participant who is no longer working there, notices this situation. They say they are committed through spirituality (Category B) and believe that they have a given mission here and that this is the place they can call home. They are pursuing mutual help as family (Category A) and watching themselves to keep being respectful with each other. Whether out of respect, fear, or religious ideas, they are submitted to rules and, except for Flora, do not criticize the vertical structure, which I will analyze next.

**Vertical structure.** The clearly vertical structure of this orphanage may be inhibiting the organization's capability to learn and adapt to change. Senge (2003) stated that systemic thinking is the fifth discipline, which makes the other *disciplines* (personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning) work together for coherent theory and practice. These disciplines oppose the *learning disabilities* that may lead an organization towards failure, in the traditional authoritarian way. Practicing these disciplines may bring effective change with the least effort.

Organizations can learn how they create problems and are responsible for their solutions. According to Morin (2008) when they know how to change their position before a problem, it means they are not expecting the problem to be “out there,” moving on its own. They have influence on what happens and create events.

An example of this is something noticed beyond what was said in the interviews, and could be an issue about discrimination among staff. Mexican staff members were willing to talk about their experiences, but refused to be formally interviewed, nor would they sign the informed consent. Refusals to accept an interview for reasons other than lack of time seem significant, especially when these members of the staff were willing to share information informally. Of course I never took such information into account in the analysis. Different possible interpretation can be derived from this fact. It could be telling us that these participants either do not have the status, self-esteem or self-assurance regarding what they say, or more directly, they do not have the permission to freely express their views. In one of the interviews, Flora referred to Alma or “higher level staff” members who were called on for certain decisions. In both cases these staff members are elder women over the age of 50, when all the rest, except Alma, are in their 20s or 30s, and Betsy in her 40s. It could be the case that these Mexican women are not educated enough or have much previous background as child care-givers. However, as mentioned before, none of the other staff members have such background. At least because these women are as spiritually committed (Category B) as the rest of the staff-parents, and because they are of an elder age, one could expect them to have the experience and respect for their opinion to be valued. Are these women being considered inferior, incapable, or not among the higher level staff? It might even put into question the “family inclusion” (Category A) concerning staff. If the orphanage is attempting to function as a democratic organization, it cannot be totally ruled by the principles of such hierarchical settings.

However, for the sake of rigor, conclusions are not allowed on such a basis and it is only posed as a question due to the fact that it was they and only they who declined to participate.

These questions bring a reflection about the type of organization we are looking at. Senge (2003) warned us about linear thinking and how it may prevent us from noticing the dynamic complexity. To see the structures in our lives and organizations, we may be aware of two main archetypes: shifting a burden to where the leverage has the best effect and identifying our limits to grow.

Whether the orphanage I studied is a learning organization (Senge, 2003) is something I can determine in this research only to a limited point with the participation of the subjects involved. As I pointed out before, this is a vertical organization. It is not possible to know how much they identify their limits regarding their growth. In terms of managing the organization and its growth, it is evident that they are aware of the fact that they cannot take more children than those they can fully care for within their current conditions. Spiritual growth (Category B) is one of the participants' main commitments, but with the information I have we cannot go further in terms of what that means for the organization as a learning organization (Senge, 2003).

In this orphanage Alma, the main director and founder, is the one who makes most of the important decisions. Although a hierarchy is probably unavoidable, assemblies, a technical council or mutual agreements should prevail when making decisions to have a democratic environment. I will come back to this point when approaching the children's right to free expression.

**Research Question 3: What are the Participants' Ideas and Practices Regarding the Four Selected Human Rights of the Child (to nutrition and health care, to be protected from further victimization, to free expression and participation and to not be exploited)?**

**First Selected Human Right of the Child: The Right to Health Care**

I first address nutrition and then healthcare.

**Nutrition.** The participants' ideas hold nutrition (Category C) as their highest priority related to physical and spiritual health (Category B). The diet for themselves and for the children is strictly vegetarian, based on the nutritional principles compiled, practiced and taught by the founder. Alma's books are based on spiritual (Category B) and personal growth. In this orphanage, according to the participants, children are not allowed any combination of protein and carbohydrates (Category C). They are given very few carbohydrates, and very little fat. I personally saw them eat up to five eggs with salad as a complete meal. They do consume a small amount of corn *tortillas*, mostly raw vegetables, fruits, fresh and dried grains, legumes, and no dairy products.

The participants claim that following the same nutritional principles, they have found that children who were medicated could leave medication when adhering to these nutritional principles (Category C). Following these same ideas, older teenagers are free to eat as they choose with some guidelines, once their immune system is strong enough.

Given the epidemic of obesity, and the invasion of junk food in the market, new nutritional standards have been established in order to prevent illnesses that are causing more frequent deaths in adults such as diabetes and heart disease. In this sense, vegetarian diets are broadly accepted nowadays, as it is known that a healthy diet includes more raw vegetables and whole food intake. This fact makes it hard to critique a diet of this kind

for institutionalized children. However, based on today's scientific references of child nutrition, according to the current official ideals of nutrition both in Mexico (Norma Mexicana para Nutrición Infantil, 1998) and the United States (Gidding et al., 2006), children should eat from all food groups. For children ages 6-10 years old these food groups include: three to four portions of dairy products, two portions of animal meat four to five times a week, two portions of legumes twice a week, at least one egg three times a week, at least two portions of vegetables every day, at least three daily portions of fruit, four to five daily portions of grains and roots, up to 4 teaspoons of sugars or honey, and a maximum of 3 teaspoons of fats. Children of these ages should drink up to six glasses of water or liquids per day. The Mayo Clinic (2016) even includes canned and different kinds of processed food—which are totally banned in the orphanage diet, unless processed within the setting—but recommends 1,400 to 2,200 calories for girls and 1,600 to 2,600 for boys who are 9-13 years old.

In comparison, alimentary proportions for the children at this orphanage differ a great deal from the scientific norms: Their energetic intake is very low and their protein seems unbalanced.

In spite of what has been analyzed regarding nutrition, it is important to stress on the fact that this orphanage is putting an extraordinary effort in thriving for self-sustainability and good nutrition for their sheltered children. Orphanages often have limitations regarding their children's food (Category C) and nutrition (A Child's Best Start, 2016). Many have to accept donations from stores like Walmart, often with a very close or expired sell-by date, and food from markets that is sometimes semi-rotten (Nájar,



2014), something I have seen with my own eyes in some orphanages. There is little control of this from governments and the Welfare Agencies. Most studies for Latina America (RELAF, 2011) worry about social rights more than about food and health of the children, in spite of the fact that all scientific references determine that nutrition has relevant consequences on learning and other important development for adult life.

***Vegetarian diet.*** Merely looking at the slim children of the orphanage, does not help to determine if the strict guidelines of their vegetarian diet are being successful, as the participants report. As I will review below, regarding health care, a pediatric screening of size, weight and general health would have to be done to determine whether or not the orphanage is being successful with their practices. However it is important to address the discussion on the theme of vegetarian nutrition (Category C).

Nowadays, there is controversy about a general idea on turning to vegetarian nutrition. On one side nutritional intake of animal protein is recommended given the amino-acids and enzymes it provides (VanVlied, 2015). However, there are different reasons for preferring a vegetarian diet. One of these reasons may be spiritual, based on beliefs, or on moral principles. Another reason may be that some elements of meat or other animal protein may have negative consequences for health in some people. In addition, information on hormones and antibiotics given to animals for human consumption (Gaby, 2013) has triggered a general alarm that prevents many parents from giving non-certified animal protein to children or themselves. The idea is that “we are what we eat” and the origins of our food make our bodies what they are.

There are also important new ideas regarding environmental sustainability for refraining from traditional omnivorous meals. One of these is that maintaining cattle, chickens for meat or eggs in an industrial manner, and irrational fishing are provoking devastation of forests, polluting the environment and endangering species (Pollan, 2011).

In conclusion, unless meat is controlled under strict rules to protect the environment, for the sake of sustainability in today's world, as well as our own health, a well-balanced vegetarian diet based on scientific research seems to be what is most recommendable.

**Water supply.** I must mention the issue of water supply at the orphanage. The staff use dry toilet systems, collect rainwater and are very careful not to waste water. They also use special watering techniques for their orchard. Water supply will become a greater problem in the future for the area where the orphanage is set as well as for other orphanages, mostly set in poor areas. The fact that this orphanage is taking care of the problem with sustainable solutions is certainly something to be emulated and studied in greater depth.

In conclusion, it was impossible to determine if there is malnutrition from only looking at the physical aspect of the children. Regarding nutrition, the limitations of the study impede further information and possibilities of analysis around this issue. I go into more detail in the following section, on health care.

**Health care.** Under the participants' ideas, healing for most illnesses comes mainly from the founder's guidance and help. All staff-parents follow the same nutritional guidelines which have allegedly healed some of the staff of chronic illness as well. If a

child is sick, no “mucus forming food” (such as cooked carbohydrates or dairy products) are given. According to the participants there is very little illness, so only the most basic care is required. A special diet is tailored for sick children who are constantly being watched by one of the staff members.

Participants said that they always take precautions such as giving children the proper nutrition and isolating ill children who may be contagious. Prescription medications are avoided as much as possible, but if children need medication, (usually upon arrival) they are seen by an allopathic medical doctor, or if necessary, taken to the State Children's Hospital, but then healed within the orphanage with proper nutrition, and sometimes homeopathy.

Amanda mentioned that they took blood tests of the children once, *and then left them alone*, a phrase that implies this was something rather bothersome for the orphanage.

They took blood tests of every child and there was a lot of trouble. Eventually they left us alone, because they saw the results. Most of the children they sent had been under medication and now they are healthy without taking them, just with our vegetarian, balanced nutrition. (Amanda)

When they came from DIF they were all sick, with a lot of mucus and other stuff. They have to go through a detox process, and they are usually quite healthy. They get ill sometimes but it isn't something like . . . serious . . . We always try to keep them healthy. If they have some condition we usually give them some lemon water or garlic or something like that, of course, always making sure that their diet is correct . . . Once in a while, we use homeopathy . . . I think Alma works with homeopathy. Or we give them some tea . . . (Betsy)

Now I compare the above practices with the American Academy of Pediatrics' guidelines that include the following items to scan for child care:

**Clinical history.** The orphanage has past records of all children but many are incomplete due partly to the conditions they came from or to members of their families being unknown.

Measurements (as recommended in Mexico) are member length, height, weight, head circumference, weight for length, body mass index, blood pressure. There is no evidence of any medical service following these developmental parameters (Ramos Galván, 1976) at this orphanage.

Vision: Children do have this service. Betsy reports that some wear glasses and one has lost the vision of one eye.

Hearing: None of the participants spoke about hearing evaluation.

They also stated that there is dental care and sight revision for all children, twice a year including orthodontics. However, they did not speak about the fluoride varnish that is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

There are further screenings to be done regarding heart health, general blood tests, STD, HIV, lead, cervical dysplasia, and dyslipidemia screenings, usually added to newborn screening which these children's files probably have not included.

There would have to be an inspection of weight and size, as well as blood tests to determine if their diet is truly healthy. According to Amanda, the *DIF* (Welfare Agency) did take blood tests of the children once and then “left them alone.” However, there are ill children often as I saw in my visits and as the participants also referred when speaking about their duties, in spite of their claim of children being mostly healthy.

Gesell (Gesell & Amatruda, 1974) created the first scale of developmental milestones by age range in 1940 and gave rise to further studies that sought to characterize developmental delay in different populations. One of the most recent scales was developed by Özmen et al. (2005) who studied 247 children and stressed on the importance of brain developmental diagnosis including history, physical examination, neuroimaging, metabolic disease screening, karyotype and fragile X testing.<sup>(3)</sup>

Another study of brain development in different countries like Rumania, UK and the United States, Johnson, Browns, and Hamilton (2006) found, as Bowlby (1969) did, that institutional care usually did not facilitate optimal development of the child reporting delays in physical growth, neural atrophy and abnormal brain development. For these authors, it is important to find loving foster homes that provide one to one relationships. The question would still remain whether an orphanage with optimal efficiency in group care could ever substitute such homes.

If we are to demand full respect of children's right to health care, the least to be expected is to follow some of the above guidelines. Nevertheless, the prioritization of health in this orphanage is to be noted, together with nutrition, it is the second main Category (Category C) that this study identified. This Category was independent from the structure and design of the research instrument. The concern that the staff and manager have for nutrition and health is not something seen in other institutions, despite their peculiar ideas, of which we must restrain from bias. We do not know how future

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(3) Fragile X syndrome is a genetic condition that causes a range of development problems, including learning disabilities and cognitive impairment. Males are more affected than females.

guidelines will be changed if when these children are adults they really have an outstanding immune system.

I address mental health care when referring to the next right.

### **Second Selected Human Right of the Children: The Right to Protection from Further Victimization**

The second selected right of the children is the right to protection from further victimization. An important challenge for this orphanage was that these children came in bad health, most of them under heavy medications, and they were asked to receive older children who would not easily be adopted. They also received children who have disabilities. There were bureaucratic and other problems with the *DIF* (National Welfare Agency). One of them was receiving families of several children in order to keep siblings together. They asked them to send only children who would stay on a permanent basis, not only be temporarily sheltered, because temporary stays brought dramatic uneasiness for the rest of children.

The critiques of the Innocenti Research Centre (2003) have addressed policies in individual countries like Mexico that hinder the protection of children in institutions. Policies for health and psycho-motor development supervision, especially for children at risk are very seldom found in welfare institutions. The only requirement the institution has had is for the children to be seen by a psychologist, her work does not seem to have any follow-up neither from the “parent” nor from the government.

During the interviews, it was clear that as a practice to protect them from further victimization, children are taught not to feel sorry for themselves nor allow others to feel sorry for them. Also, tantrums and bad-temper fits are “cut on the moment”. They ask the

child insistently to stop, and the idea of crying or “bursting into tears” being “obsolete” was mentioned at different times.

This is probably the most controversial of all themes that were identified during the interviews. I confess as a researcher that in the beginning I felt shocked when I saw and heard children were sometimes not allowed to cry. However, the overwhelming amount of work the staff are loaded with and the impossibility of dealing with every child's demands for attention is something to be taken into account. Later on, when I had heard other comments, I learned what was behind this and found sense in the argument about not allowing children to be sorry for themselves and to confront their feelings of sorrow by remembering that they now have a new life and every reason to be happy. After I presented the summary of themes that appeared in reference to “strengthening their character” Dora stated:

No, this is not to strengthen their character. This is to teach children they are the masters of their own lives and happiness no matter what happens to them, how they are affected depends on how they take it and how much responsibility they take for themselves and how they respond to life, so they are taught to not see themselves as victims of life. (Dora)

Specifically about crying, Kagan (2004) stated: “Reclaiming lost children also means helping them learn to lower their guard and mourn what they have lost. Many traumatized children have learned never to cry” (p. 143).

“... Adults help children to heal by showing them that they are safe to cry and to grieve without fear (of being abandoned)” (p. 148).

Further, Kagan (2004) also asserted that traumatized children need to grieve:

Grief leads to reconnecting, but children must feel safe to let go of their fears and rage . . . if the adults in children's life are unwilling or unable to face past and present dangers, children will very naturally cling to the hope that somehow, in

some magical way, the past reality will disappear like a nightmare and their wishes for ideal parents will come true. Before children can grieve, they have to have someone in their lives who validates their experience and helps them muster the courage to heal the reality of their losses. . . . kinship or foster/adoptive parents cannot erase the pain of a child's lost dreams of the original family healing and any effort to lessen a child's love for lost parents is tantamount to invalidation, typically sparking defiance to new care takers . . . (p. 156)

If we take a psychoanalytical point of view, Freudian analysts like Klein (1937/1985) would not plead for letting or not letting a child cry, but rather for working with the child therapeutically using games to help her or him to symbolize the traumatic episodes.

In fact, if a child is not crying after having been neglected, in agreement with Kagan (2004) it could mean a lack of emotion which may be showing that “anxiety is kept latent (but) experienced all along [ . . . ] Interpretations which synthesize the split in the self, including the dispersal of emotions, make it possible for the anxiety to be experienced as such” (p. 273). These classics of psychoanalysis, more than outdated, give basis for further important theories like the theory of attachment (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) and the theory of resilience mentioned in the literature review (Cyrulnik, 2009), (Guenard, 2003).

Therapists also know that “the child is living in a dynamic world of human relationships. The conditions which have created the maladjustment may still be operating. The child may not be able to combat the other forces that stifle his/her psychological world.” (Axline, 1993, p. 127)

When problems with relationships appear in this orphanage, the participants claim that they are resolved by the parents, addressed in meetings or, if it is a more serious issue, they are taken to the founder (Alma) who is like “everybody's mother.” Children



with special psychological needs, according to the interviewees, are taken to her. They assure that she has worked extensively with all the children and lots of experience with special cases. The *DIF* (National Welfare Agency) requires the visit of a psychologist. This psychologist who has a professional training is chosen by the orphanage; however, staff-parents do not seem to have much contact or information from this psychologist.

The situation described above brings greater concern regarding issues of sexual abuse. What participants reported was that to approach sexual abuse and other traumas such issues are “discussed with the psychologist or the parent”, who is, Eloy asserts, “also each child’s closest confident”. However, most of them “don’t know the person” (referring to the psychologist).

Communication meetings are held weekly among the children to improve their interactions and relationships and foster in them the habit of speaking out when they feel something is not fair or someone is not treating them well. If they see the necessity, “the children get sexual education” during these meetings.

Education regarding sexuality in families may be undertaken in many ways. The range of this education can go from avoiding issues that remain untouched, to explicit or even aggressive and damaging explanations and attitudes. It is certainly a delicate theme, especially with children who have suffered abuse.

Needless to say, regarding sexuality it is more than education that children at an orphanage require. It is the way to manage their traumatic experiences and confusing desires which they need to address, and it is their health and dignity that are at stake. We may only hope that the psychologist the orphanage has hired is able to work with

seriously traumatized children. Of course, depending on the psychologist's orientation, he or she may treat sexual damage from a very different approach. For psychoanalysts, for example, this damage would represent a lot more than for a Gestalt therapist, a cognitive-behavioral therapist, and so on, depending on their standpoint. The theoretical approach is different, considering the importance given to psycho-sexual evolution in the individual's personality for life. If we take psychoanalysis as an example, “early life narratives created by Freud, Erickson, Klein, Mahler and Kohut will be all somewhat different even for the same case material” (Stern, 1998, p. 15)

The indisputable fact is that sexuality is the basis of life and learning to care for it with dignity is an essential knowledge which must be addressed in a clear way. Dealing with sexual issues is something that still seems to bring a lot of conflict in this orphanage, as it is not an issue which is easy to talk about.

Even if we agree with the participant's opinion in that there is “not one treatment that works for all children”, their contradiction with this statement is evident when they claim that they do “impose the same clear consequences” for different behaviors. This is not to be discussed in this paper, but it is only one of many issues in question for which professional intervention would be needed.

The main strategies for treating previously victimized children are as they express “respect for the specific characteristics of each child” (Dora), and facing misbehavior with “just discipline, warnings and consequences, a positive motivational system and, if necessary, negative consequence system” (Eloy). This seems to be based on a behavioral analysis approach (Skinner, 1984) which has been put into question by several authors

(Naik, 1998) for its lack of depth and understanding of the child's unconscious needs and conflicts.

According to Winnicott (1979) severe misbehavior may be meaning that the child is “acting out his (her) last hope” to be given attention. Attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) that studies attachment disorders (Brackerman-Krannenburg et al., 2011; Forbes & Post, 2008; Kagan, 2004) is also to be remembered in these cases.

The American Psychology Association (2009) has determined that

. . . many of the treatments that traumatized children and adolescents receive have not been empirically studied. Although it is possible that some of these unexamined treatments could be helpful, it is also possible that some pose a risk to those who receive them. (American Psychological Association, 2008, What We Know section, para.14)

And beyond behavioral analysis derivations that include “consequences” which are too often euphemisms for punishment, they have found that

Cognitive Behavioral Techniques have been shown to be effective in treating children and adolescents who have persistent trauma reactions. Cognitive Behavioral Techniques has demonstrated to reduce certain trauma reactions such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), other anxiety and depressive symptoms, and behavioral problems. Most evidence-based, trauma focused treatments include the opportunity for the child to review the trauma in a safe, secure, environment under the guidance of a specially trained mental health professional. (American Psychological Association, 2008, What We Know section, para. 15)

In any case, following the recommended screening for children's health of the American Heart Association, not only recommends screening tests for children, but also developmental and behavioral assessment. With regard to these recommendations, most of the participants in this study seem to rely entirely on Alma's criteria and disregard other assessments, like this one and others that the American Heart Association recommends, such as autism screening, developmental surveillance, or psycho-social

behavioral and alcohol or drug use tests. Alcohol intake is mentioned only once in the case of a boy who was received at age 11 from an alcoholic mother. He refused to follow rules after he turned 18, but Amanda said that before that he did ask several times to be restrained from attending parties as he might be tempted to drink. It does not look as if he received any further treatment.

Most important of these recommendations for institutionalized children deprived of their family is certainly depression screening, because these children are at risk of falling into depression due to the losses they have suffered.

It is not easy to come to conclusions about a setting where care-givers show interest, love and serious concern for their sheltered children. However, the discussion above has led me to disagree with Wolins (1974) in the idea that professional work and deeper thinking may be necessary to heal traumatized children.

### **Third Selected Human Right of the Children: The Right to Free Expression and Participation**

According to the participants of this study, the parents of the children organize assemblies, and daily/weekly meetings at every home. In these meetings, as mentioned above, children learn to speak their mind in a positive, forthright way, and to become more confident of their communication. They may even ask to be changed to another parent if they feel they have many problems with their present ones. These meetings and in everyday life, children are encouraged to be open. In addition, the children are given many different opportunities for artistic activities, which encourage free expression.

It is also worth mentioning that care takers speak to the children in English. This may also improve the expression possibilities of the children because if they become bilingual they can communicate with people from other countries who speak English.

In this orphanage there is a central problem regarding the language skills which are basic for the children's expression. The need for bilingualism comes from the staff not being native Spanish speakers and the few Mexican staff not speaking English well enough. Bilingualism has been more accepted and promoted in the past few years as the global village shrinks. Bilingual and multilingualism open the world and its many cultures, something these children are already exposed too in a fortunate way.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of discussions on this matter among scholars, which we may consider briefly. Are the staff-parents ready to understand when a language delay is due to forced bilingualism? Are they aware of the language barriers it may bring in order to minimize them? Are they able to make the proper decisions by recognizing the typical stages of dual language learning? Could language impairments be due to this forced bilingualism, in addition to the children's original communication restraints? These and other issues related to language use are tackled by Paradis, Genesee, and Crago (2004) who are still figuring out the many complications of dual language. More recently, Dahany, Kohnert, Pahm et. al. (2014) studied pertinent treatments that are effective for children with primary language impairment. The theme of bilingualism is revisited later when discussing the influence of the peer group in the prerequisites for efficient group care later.

Within the orphanage, all doors are literally open for anybody to leave or stay as they choose, children included. However, doors are far away from where children are and where their activities take place. Doors are closed at night and during the day there is a person close to the door, at the reception. This “freedom to stay or leave” is a real option for adults, but for not children. If an extreme case would come as it did with a couple of girls who escaped, the choice of staying or leaving is presented as a what- is-a-worse situation: Staying where you don’t want, or being homeless and alone in the streets, or going to an unknown place where things may become even more difficult. Even inside the orphanage “to change parents” has many aspects that also invite discussion. In any case, any kind of freedom implies a high level of responsibility for the children and more so for their care takers.

Free expression and participation could be much more enhanced. An important idea is that children can vote and learn the laws, rules, rights, and enforcement of all of these (Hart, 1992; Ackerman, Feeney, Hart, & Newman, 2003; Reddy & Ratna, 2002), especially when it affects their lives. In this theme, Hart's ladder (1992), which none of the participants had ever heard about, is what may be recommended for children to learn and live their right to participation with better awareness of all involved. As I stated before, the stairs of the Hart’s ladder go from manipulating and deceiving children at the bottom stair, taking children as decoration on a second one, using them as tokens on the third, and assigning projects to informed children on the fourth step. Children are informed and consulted in the following step; adult-initiated projects sharing decisions with children are the sixth step; letting children initiate and direct a project on the

seventh, and projects that are initiated by children who share decisions with adults would be the top of the ladder. This ladder may be used with children as young as three up to 18 (Hart, 1992; Reddy & Ratna, 2002). Even if this setting is far from being democratic, the right of children to free expression seems to be somehow respected. However this right could be developed further if Hart's ladder went as he stated, from tokenism to citizenship within the orphanage. Then children would be ready to create laws and their enforcement and live them in a consequent manner.

#### **Fourth Selected Human Right of the Children: The Right to Not be Exploited**

Except when they are very young, children have to do basic home chores and basic self-care, and occasionally if they are willing they can take care of younger or children in need.

Children are encouraged to pursue careers and interests by giving them books and many opportunities to develop their interests and improve their skills.

Sometimes, small manufacture businesses are encouraged so children learn from that experience. Older boys can participate in building and other tasks and are paid for with money kept by parents for them to buy something they need or want.

Older children help with chickens, cropping, watering the orchard, other general chores, an occasional cleanup of the grounds for a few hours (1-2 Saturdays a month) and their daily home chores. Children also help with school cleanup. If a child wants to, he or she may take care of younger children. It is never an obligation.

Money to sustain the orphanage for purposes other than educational does not come from children's labor. All this means is that children do work, but not in a

productive manner to sustain themselves or the orphanage, and if there are any earnings, they can have access to them. However, there is also more than can be done. Children can learn about, for, and from this and other human rights in order to be empowered to defend them. About human rights as basic information; for human rights as they learn to become the defenders of these rights for other children; and from the practice of the reinforcement of human rights by the stakeholders in the everyday life (Cascon 1985; Limpens & Murrieta, 2000).

Almost 2 million children are exploited in some kind of labor in Mexico (Rojas, 2003; Nájar, 2014). Many if not all of the children in the orphanage were liable to have had a labor exploitation experience. Coldrey (2000) reported on one of the many cases of corruption in care residences. Exploitation of children in such placements without enough supervision is easy and still ongoing (Nájar, 2015). There was a famous case of even the disappearance of children who could have been abducted for slavery or organ traffic: 26 children were reported as disappeared in 2008 from an orphanage in Mexico. It was discovered when a woman fought to recover her ten year old granddaughter. It is the famous case of “*Casitas del Sur*” (Little houses of the South) (Martínez, 2010).

As a conclusion of this section we can state that there is no forced labor with production or pay below market rates, thus we cannot say there is exploitation of children in this orphanage. However, as stated before in the literature review, to have full respect regarding the right to not be exploited children need the emotional process that changes the perspective of their self in a capitalist society for their future. The child learns in a social context, framed in an economic and historical reality (Vygotsky, 1978). This is



why a just community (Kohlberg, 1985) and the understanding of the child's moral development (Kohlberg, 1985; Piaget, 1932/1962) would prepare the children to not be exploited in the future. Also the knowledge of, about and from the children's human rights (Limpens & Murrieta, 2000; Cascón, 1985) could truly help prevent further victimization and exploitation.

**Research Question 4: What Characteristics Can the Participants of This Orphanage and the Researcher Determine as Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care in This Institution to Achieve Best Practice?**

I based this question on Wolins' (1974) prerequisites for efficient group care which follow.

**First Prerequisite: A Clear Value System**

Although this orphanage is founded on a spiritual base, participants have stated that children are not directly taught about spirituality. Their clear system of values may be expressed in the following way: what you give you receive; people involved must take care of their bodies and their things; if you have too much, you must eliminate and give to others who are in greater need. Everybody at the orphanage must take care of animals, of younger children, or of people who have special needs, as well as avoid racism, and be open minded about other cultures. Another value lies in having and building proper relationships, always being honest and fair. The main value is to act out of love and compassion.

What also should be clear to all in the setting is that these values are above personal authorities. This allows children to suggest rules and for staff to commit to these rules, even if a director still is the major coordinator of the facility (Korczac, 2008; Makarenko, 1935/1996; Wolins, 1974). All this will allow a sense of predictability for all

in the community, which is the one prerequisite where this orphanage may be put into question to some point.

### **Second Prerequisite: A Committed Staff**

This orphanage has a very small team of nine people. They are always too busy, overloaded with work. All staff-parents are volunteers but some teachers are hired, as are a cook, cleaning person and maintenance workers who are under contract. Commitment is of utmost importance for them. Same ideals bond staff together. Above all what unites them is their work and equal commitment to serving others and improving themselves as individuals so that they can better serve others. Staff members consider good relationships to be of utmost importance. Self-reflection is constant about understanding and compassion for their personal spiritual growth (Category B). This is basic to work without any remuneration but only help from family and friends. Thus it is this spiritual satisfaction (Category B) which seems to be necessary for them to be committed.

Staff consider that specific spiritual practices and guidelines for nutrition (Category C) are required to help them maintain balanced and healthy for their work. Occasionally, the staff gets extra help from volunteers from Mexico and other parts of the world that come and go. I met many of these youngsters performing different activities during my visits.

Any organization of group care must take into account the needs of the staff that will commit to children who are not their own and who may present severe challenges in rearing and living with. In this case, this has apparently been well-taken care of.

In developed countries today, reuniting families instead of removing children for foster or group care is preferred (Nelson, 1997). The foster care alternative is based on evidence that families break up, and that they are neglectful or abuse their children. Children are the most vulnerable part of this growing social reality. When separations occur again in the new environment, their attachment needs are severely threatened. (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Kagan, 2004).

For the best interest of the children deprived of family, should all orphanages hire staff that is attracted to a spiritual center? Or should specific requirements be established for hiring? Is being a volunteer seeking for personal growth the best way to assure commitment? In any case, we can conclude there is a committed staff in this orphanage.

### **Third Prerequisite: Predictability for all Involved**

Responses for this item asserted that there are a lot of changes but for the better, that evolution is change. They claim that the reasons for the changes are such that there is more predictability leading to an improvement in the lives and structures of all staff and children. “A predictable outcome is that all changes are changes for the better. What is always predictable? What is predictable are the same values and beliefs, training and expectations, as well as nutrition and health care.” What they consider most important is that children know that they are here to stay for as long as they want, even after they turn 18 as long as if they meet requirements and wish to stay.

As a visitor, I often could not find the children I was supposed to work with. I would lose time asking and walking around the large grounds of the setting. It was confusing not to have a fixed reference of where to go every time I visited. The

maintenance workers were often moving furniture and other items from one house to another. It is easy to suppose this may be confusing for them and the children as well.

There are contradictions regarding the stability of the parenting staff. For example, they say that children can change parents if they wish, something that is not completely feasible because Eloy is the only father and they do not mix older girls and boys within the homes.

The claim that “evolution is change” could be taken as an euphemism. Stability is also necessary for development, and stability is not the same as stagnation. Some constancy in everyday life is important for security and future adaptation.

Aside from this, the fact that children are there “to stay” could contradict their right to be adopted into a family. This is something that has not been discussed as a result of the righteous conviction that this is a large family (Category A) already and if children see someone go, this will make them feel insecure about their attachments. In the United States there are children who have up to 50 changes in placements (Wolins, 1974). As Professor Kristine Nelson once stated: “Sometime we take more care of placing a plant than a child” (K. Nelson, personal communication, November, 20, 2004).

In conclusion, this is one prerequisite that is not fulfilled within the studied orphanage. There is not enough predictability to completely maintain the relaxed environment the children need.

#### **Fourth Prerequisite: A Setting Integrated With the Community**

When there was a school at the orphanage, it included children from the outside community and the orphanage children interacted with them. (At this time this school that remains within the setting, only admits children from the orphanage.)

There are weekly activities to receive children from the community and children often visit and attend sports or recreational activities in the community, such as soccer training and games with a soccer league in the town and attending the Boy and Girl Scout activities. There is a soccer team and children play outside often. There are some transportation problems that retain them from taking the children out, because gas and car maintenance are expensive.

The participants also reported that some of the settlement houses are rented to community members who participate in the inner project activities.

The integration of the setting into the community is a prerequisite emphasized by Wolins (1974) due to the concern of orphanage children being stigmatized by outsiders. In Mexican culture marginalization of children from the orphanage in the community is not very probable. On the contrary, it is common that children from an institution are better taken care of by outsiders and considered to have a special status, provided that the setting is open enough to the community. In this case, we see the children engaged in activities with outsiders, especially those involved in sustainable gardening and promoting environmental awareness. Children are then familiar to groups and are not foreign to places where such activities take place.

In conclusion, for this prerequisite I can state that the orphanage is well integrated with the surrounding community.

**Fifth Prerequisite: A Healthy Influence from Peers**

According to the participants of this research, relationships with peers are difficult to control at a regular school because a lot of the children are academically deprived and many have not attended school before, so it has been better for them to study in a different environment. The participants assured that peers are very caring with younger children; they calm them and teach them what they have learned. They also said that most children in the orphanage are a positive influence, although there are some troublemakers, but most of the children are a good example to others. They reported that in the evening communication meetings the children help resolve each other's issues. Flora said that there is a program for adolescents to provide a healthy opportunity to have good relations among them and that all children are taught to help the ones with special needs to feel loved and to overcome previous rejections. I saw at least two cases where this is true.

Peer influence is always important for growing children, and even more for orphans. An institutionalized child needs parents to be replaced in some way. Aside from caring for children deprived of family, to provide the best method of raising children was the purpose of the Kibbutz organization of group care, studied by Wolins (1974). One of his main preoccupations was peer influence among these children. Bettelheim (1969) even attributed Oedipus complex affection from the children to their peers, whose presence was supposed to substitute the mother and father figures.

In large orphanages, the adult-child ratio can be up to 15 to one (A Child's Best Start, 2016). In the studied placement, the rate child-adult is four to one, and sometimes it

comes down to three to one. Nonetheless as the staff has so many tasks that are not directly related to them, one can often find up to 15 children in the care of one adult. In such situations there is a noticeable emphasis in teaching peaceful and considerate relations among children, especially between the older and the younger.

We can conclude there is a healthy influence from the peers as reported by participants and from the experience of the researcher's visits. However, there might be situations that are out of sight and also out of the staff supervision, because children relate in different ways when adults are not present.

**Sixth Prerequisite: A Socially Constructive Engagement of Children and Their Participation in Useful Activities that Help Develop a Sense of Competence and Ownership, a Strong Character, and a Unique Personal Identity**

Participants report that children volunteer in an array of activities: taking the compost to the chickens, taking care of dogs, doing other basic chores in the house, cooking, gardening and helping maintenance workers. There are also painting classes, and different workshops carried out by volunteers, like arts and crafts, writing, musical instruments, dancing and air-dance choreography, computing.

They have specific spiritual practices, spiritual workshops for adolescents if they choose to, as another constructive activity they can engage in. The best opportunities for these are, of course, the assemblies and night meetings.

Ownership which in the sense that Wolins uses it, can be more understood as a sense of belonging, is shown by children in responsibilities for the orphanage community like spontaneously tutoring younger children.

The above prerequisite is really five in one: (a) a socially constructive engagement of children, (b) participation of children in useful activities, (c) the development of a sense of competence and ownership, (d) the development of a strong character, and (e) the development of a unique personal identity. As stated by participants, all efforts are directed to fulfill these prerequisites since the orphanage was founded. However, there is still a pending discussion on the fourth area: strong character. Dora says this not in their agenda, but instead “not letting the children feel as victims of life”. The methods to reach this purpose are what may be questioned.

### **Other Considerations**

An institution like this one will not exist in the world. There may be spiritual searches, like in most of existing orphanages and some may be very similar in some of the characteristics (Faith to Action, 2014). However, there are several features that make this institution unique. Aside from what I have mentioned and discussed before, I must call attention to something that was only referred to when introducing the orphanage: The facilities, which are very interesting in this case. Currently, there are very few studies in Mexico about orphanages and their conditions, but I was recently surprised to find an investigation in Torreón city in the North of Mexico. It is a transversal study of eight orphanages in this city (Berlanga, Fernández, Chavira- Zuñiga et. al., 2007). They studied sanitary conditions of the facilities and living conditions of the children with great detail, but more specifically the manipulation of food. As other studies, these researchers find that those orphanages in Torreón are very poor and neglected. Nevertheless it is important to note that they brought attention to facilities, which are a fundamental part of



life in an institution. They did a thorough supervision of many details regarding the sanitation and general conditions of the facilities in these eight orphanages.

The orphanage I studied has excellent facilities (described in Chapter Two), that are constantly maintained, as far as I could see during my visits. Maybe for this reason I did not pay much attention to this fact before. However it is something to definitively highlight in the recommendations for institutional childcare, as well as sanitary conditions and personal grooming of the children, which is also very well attended in the institution I studied.

Regarding the Categories that were the participants' main contribution (A: providing a family to the sheltered children through B: spirituality in action, and C: nutrition-based health care), these features could make it sound like the work of this orphanage is more centered in specifically ideal values lived by adults than centering actions on the children. However, it is indisputable that their unique work and efforts give a great opportunity to children who were on a lost road. I can state that very few or almost none of the typical faults commonly seen and feared of in orphanages are seen here.

### **General Conclusion**

...parentless children were never seen; though many lose their parents, they were immediately absorbed into family groups of the village, so that at no time are there any unincorporated or unwelcome groups of people. At least that's how it was then.

— Martín Prechtel, *The Secrets of the Talking Jaguar. Memoirs from the Living Heart of a Mayan Village*

The epigraph illustrates an ideal situation where the cultural values wouldn't allow children to ever have to be taken to an orphanage. According to literature researched,

institutionalization of children in group care is questioned for the results it has had (Brackerman-Krannenburg et al., 2011; Wolins, 1974; Zimmerman, 2005). Nonetheless, institutions of group child care will still remain (Innocenti Research, 2003), and in the future they will probably be much needed. Thus, as a result of this research beside Wolins' (1974) prerequisites, I pose the following new prerequisites for group childcare:

### **New Proposed Prerequisites for Efficient Group Care**

As I end this report of my research I add the recommendations that I consider pertinent after what I learned from the experience of the orphanage I studied.

#### **Coupling of Services and Parenting**

My first recommendation is to pursue a clear coupling of managing, academic, and healing services, with orphanage parenting of staff to improve their work and learn from each other. This coupling should be granted between administrative staff, teachers, providers of emotional healing services, and other therapists with substitute parents. A professional team of psychologists and pediatricians should work in screening children's physical and mental health (Category C) as well as keeping records and following the care and development of children in all areas. An institution should provide all tools and services for children based on research of best practices to develop fully socially, psychologically and spiritually (Category B)

#### **Facilities and sustainability**

Given the importance of environment that the orphanage setting provides, I recommend a continuous revision of the conditions, sanitation and functioning of the

facilities. Painting, plumbing, leak prevention and other maintenance should be supervised on regular basis under a fixed checklist.

Buildings, specifically dormitories and living rooms, should be built in a manner in which children and adults can interact and be contained comfortably. A round architecture like the one of the studied orphanage is recommendable for better and equal possibilities of conviviality among its inhabitants. Dining rooms ought to be set in a way that children can relate to each other during meals. Kitchens should be kept immaculate and under strict norms of hygiene and safety. They should be accessible to children who want to participate and learn to cook. Playgrounds should be sized to hold diverse activities of children, allowing vigilance of safety for them. Toys, both recreational and educational and playground installations should be available without consumerism.

Green areas are extremely important for children to interact as part of nature. If possible, organic orchards and fruit trees where children can learn from planting, growing and harvesting food should be included. Facilities should prevent water care and all energy-saving possibilities as well as balance regarding use of resources.

### **Vigilance of Nutrition and Healthcare**

Physical health based on good nutrition (Category C) is as a priority in a group care setting. A vegetarian diet is recommendable for environmental protection in addition to health and spiritual motivation (Category B). Unless meat is controlled under strict rules to protect human health and the environment, for the sake of sustainability in today's world, a well-balanced vegetarian diet based on scientific research is the most recommendable. In this same sense, a program of physical exercise for the children

should be specifically added to the “useful activities” that Wolins suggested in his sixth prerequisite.

Respect and attention to health and dignity of the children, should include their hygiene habits and a dignified, modest presentation and grooming.

### **Requirements for Parenting**

More than holding a job, staff that work in an orphanage should have the opportunity of feeling the commitment of a mission that brings spiritual growth (Category B) both for the children and themselves within a family-like (Category A) community. To this end, all their psychological, emotional, physical, sociological, financial and spiritual needs should be taken into account as much as the ones of the children. All the aforementioned features should be covered in order for the satisfactions of the staff-parents’ journey to be larger than the challenges it represents.

### **Democracy**

An institution for child care is the ideal placement to teach and learn democratic practices. Regular assemblies, a technical council or mutual agreements should prevail when making decisions that affect the children. I suggest a set of institutional rules where the participation of the children is “stepping up” according to Hart's (1992) ladder into full citizenship.

Learning about, for and from human rights should be a mandatory requirement for all institutionalized children (Cascon, 1985; Limpens & Murrieta, 2000, Korzcak, 2006/1925; Makarenko, 1996/1935) within a just community (Kohlberg, 1985).

### **Spirituality**

Based on the clear value system that Wolins (1974 ) suggested I would rather speak of an ethical approach supported by disciplined good habits, as well as a personal spiritual growth search (Category B). This means a search of a good-living life-path taught, more than with words, by spiritual action that shows compassion and love, and giving the example of good role modeling.

To develop the full sense of dignity in the children is as important as providing physical health care (Category C). Thus, as a spiritual asset (Category B), children deprived of their family may be taught to not see themselves as victims of life, being dissuaded from self-pity, nor allowing others to feel sorry for them, learning they are the masters of their life and happiness.

### **Policies from Decision Makers**

The most basic recommendation is for decision makers in Mexico: Regular supervision of orphanages should be mandatory as well as the assurance of basic budget per child for their true protection in all senses. The aforementioned prerequisites, in addition to the ones formulated by Wolins (1974) may be used for this supervision.

### **New Paths and Questions**

Perhaps the main value of doing this case study was to understand the underlying complexity of life in the institution (Morin, 2008). This information yields more than just evidence. It provides clues and paths to help similar enterprises. It also taught me which events or everyday practices offer contents for further research regarding children's physical, emotional, social and mental development. After having studied this particular case I would furthermore like to mention spiritual development in

the context of institutional group care. The examination of several subtleties and intricacies allowed me to go in depth into some of the problems of this orphanage. This gives me the means to understand it enough to participate and help this kind of organizations in the future. This case study can serve as a model to compare to other case studies and further research in the field.

There are still a lot of questions to be asked for further research. Perhaps the most important one is about the policies with which society and governments should be concerned when supervising and caring for children deprived of their family. It is impossible to follow the above prerequisites for efficient group care if the social and political contexts are at odds with the care of children, as it happens in many countries like Mexico today.

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APPENDIX A

ARTICLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON  
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD THAT REFER TO THE FOUR  
SELECTED HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE CHILD  
STUDIED IN THIS RESEARCH

ARTICLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON  
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD THAT REFER TO THE FOUR SELECTED HUMAN  
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**First right: The right to adequate nutrition and to health care:**

**Article 24**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.
2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures:
  - (a) To diminish infant and child mortality;
  - (b) To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;
  - (c) To combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care, through the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;

Within Article 24, the following items are not related to this research:

3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.
4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right recognized in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

**Second right: The right to be protected from previous victimization:**

**Article 19**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances

of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

### **Article 23**

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.
2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.
3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development
4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international cooperation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

### **Article 25**

States Parties recognize the right of a child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

### **Article 27**

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.
3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

#### **Article 36**

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

#### **Article 39**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

### **Third right: The right to free expression**

#### **Article 12**

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

#### **Article 13**

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
  - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or
  - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals.

#### **Article 14**

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

#### **Article 15**

1. States Parties recognize the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

#### **Fourth right: The right to not be exploited:**

#### **Article 31**

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

#### **Article 32**

States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic *exploitation* and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

- (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
- (b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
- (c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

#### **Article 33**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs



and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

#### **Article 34**

**States** Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

APPENDIX B

FACT SHEET WITH A SUMMARY OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD  
UNDER THE CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

### **FACT SHEET:**

#### **A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Article 1 (Definition of the child):** The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the monitoring body for the Convention, has encouraged States to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18.

**Article 2 (Non-discrimination):** The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

**Article 3 (Best interests of the child):** The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

**Article 4 (Protection of rights):** Governments have a responsibility to take all available measures to make sure children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. When countries ratify the Convention, they agree to review their laws relating to children. This involves assessing their social services, legal, health and educational systems, as well as levels of funding for these services. Governments are then obliged to take all necessary steps to ensure that the minimum standards set by the Convention in these areas are being met. They must help families protect children's rights and create an environment where they can grow and reach their potential. In some instances, this may involve changing existing laws or creating new ones. Such legislative changes are not imposed, but come about through the same process by which any law is created or reformed within a country. Article 41 of the Convention points out the when a country already has higher legal standards than those seen in the Convention, the higher standards always prevail.

**Article 5 (Parental guidance):** Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly. Helping children to understand their rights does not mean pushing them to make choices with consequences that they are too young to handle. Article 5 encourages parents to deal with rights issues "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child". The Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It does place on governments the responsibility to protect and assist families in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of children.

**Article 6 (Survival and development):** Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

**Article 7 (Registration, name, nationality, care):** All children have the right to a legally

registered name, officially recognized by the government. Children have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country). Children also have the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

**Article 8 (Preservation of identity):** Children have the right to an identity – an official record of who they are. Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

**Article 9 (Separation from parents):** Children have the right to live with their parent(s), unless it is bad for them. Children whose parents do not live together have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

**Article 10 (Family reunification):** Families whose members live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

**Article 11 (Kidnapping):** Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally. This article is particularly concerned with parental abductions. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography has a provision that concerns abduction for financial gain.

**\*Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child):** When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. This does not mean that children can now tell their parents what to do. This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making -- not give children authority over adults. Article 12 does not interfere with parents' right and responsibility to express their views on matters affecting their children. Moreover, the Convention recognizes that the level of a child's participation in decisions must be appropriate to the child's level of maturity. Children's ability to form and express their opinions develops with age and most adults will naturally give the views of teenagers greater weight than those of a preschooler, whether in family, legal or administrative decisions.

**\*Article 13 (Freedom of expression):** Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing.

**\*Article 14 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion):** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should help guide their children in these matters. The Convention respects the rights and duties of parents in providing religious and moral guidance to their children. Religious groups around the world have expressed support for the Convention, which indicates that it in no way prevents parents from bringing their children up within a religious tradition. At the same time, the Convention recognizes that as children mature and are able to form their own views,

some may question certain religious practices or cultural traditions. The Convention supports children's right to examine their beliefs, but it also states that their right to express their beliefs implies respect for the rights and freedoms of others.

**\*Article 15 (Freedom of association):** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights. In exercising their rights, children have the responsibility to respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

**Article 16 (Right to privacy):** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

**Article 17 (Access to information; mass media):** Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well-being. Governments should encourage mass media – radio, television, newspapers and Internet content sources – to provide information that children can understand and to not promote materials that could harm children. Mass media should particularly be encouraged to supply information in languages that minority and indigenous children can understand. Children should also have access to children's books.

**Article 18 (Parental responsibilities; state assistance):** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments must respect the responsibility of parents for providing appropriate guidance to their children – the Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It places a responsibility on governments to provide support services to parents, especially if both parents work outside the home.

**\*Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence):** Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. In terms of discipline, the Convention does not specify what forms of punishment parents should use. However any form of discipline involving violence is unacceptable. There are ways to discipline children that are effective in helping children learn about family and social expectations for their behavior – ones that are non-violent, are appropriate to the child's level of development and take the best interests of the child into consideration. In most countries, laws already define what sorts of punishments are considered excessive or abusive. It is up to each government to review these laws in light of the Convention.

**Article 20 (Children deprived of family environment):** Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly,

by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language.

**Article 21 (Adoption):** Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. The first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether they are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.

**Article 22 (Refugee children):** Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees (if they have been forced to leave their home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

**\*Article 23 (Children with disabilities):** Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives.

**\*Article 24 (Health and health services):** Children have the right to good quality health care – the best health care possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**\*Article 25 (Review of treatment in care):** Children who are looked after by their local authorities, rather than their parents, have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate. Their care and treatment should always be based on “the best interests of the child”. (see Guiding Principles, Article 3)

**Article 26 (Social security):** Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need.

**\*Article 27 (Adequate standard of living):** Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

**Article 28: (Right to education):** All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools should respect children’s dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence. Any form of school discipline should take into account the child's human dignity. Therefore, governments must ensure that school administrators review their discipline policies and eliminate any discipline practices involving physical or mental violence, abuse or neglect. The Convention places a high value on education. Young people should be encouraged to reach the highest level of education of which they are capable.

**Article 29 (Goals of education):** Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parents. The Convention does not address such issues as school uniforms, dress codes, the singing of the national anthem or prayer in schools. It is up to governments and school officials in each country to determine whether, in the context of their society and existing laws, such matters infringe upon other rights protected by the Convention.

**Article 30 (Children of minorities/indigenous groups):** Minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone; the Convention here highlights this right in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.

**\*Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture):** Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

**\*Article 32 (Child labor):** The government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education. While the Convention protects children from harmful and exploitative work, there is nothing in it that prohibits parents from expecting their children to help out at home in ways that are safe and appropriate to their age. If children help out in a family farm or business, the tasks they do be safe and suited to their level of development and comply with national labour laws. Children's work should not jeopardize any of their other rights, including the right to education, or the right to relaxation and play.

**Article 33 (Drug abuse):** Governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade.

**\*Article 34 (Sexual exploitation):** Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

**\*Article 35 (Abduction, sale and trafficking):** The government should take all measures possible to make sure that children are not abducted, sold or trafficked. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

**\*Article 36 (Other forms of exploitation):** Children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.

**Article 37 (Detention and punishment):** No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should

not be put in prison with adults, should be able to keep in contact with their families, and should not be sentenced to death or life imprisonment without possibility of release.

**Article 38 (War and armed conflicts):** Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Children under 15 should not be forced or recruited to take part in a war or join the armed forces. The Convention's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict further develops this right, raising the age for direct participation in armed conflict to 18 and establishing a ban on compulsory recruitment for children under 18.

**\*Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims):** Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover and reintegrate into society. Particular attention should be paid to restoring the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

**Article 40 (Juvenile justice):** Children who are accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights. Governments are required to set a minimum age below which children cannot be held criminally responsible and to provide minimum guarantees for the fairness and quick resolution of judicial or alternative proceedings.

**Article 41 (Respect for superior national standards):** If the laws of a country provide better protection of children's rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

**Article 42 (Knowledge of rights):** Governments should make the Convention known to adults and children. Adults should help children learn about their rights, too. (See also article 4.)

**Articles 43-54 (implementation measures):** These articles discuss how governments and international organizations like UNICEF should work to ensure children are protected in their rights.



APPENDIX C  
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED  
FOR INTERVIEWS

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENT QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED FOR INTERVIEWS

This questionnaire is based on the four Research Questions for this study:

Research Question 1. How do participants in the orphanage view their work?

1.1. Previous experience

1.1.1. Is this your first experience with orphaned children, or with other forms of institutional care (schools, hospitals, hospices)? Please describe such previous experience.

1.1.2. How relevant was such previous experience for your work here?

1.2. Personal participation

1.2.1. What are your current principle responsibilities/activities here?

1.2.2. What were your activities in your previous job/assignment here?

1.2.3. What kind of decisions do you routinely make in the context of your work?

1.2.4. Do you have to ask for a higher approval to take a decision?

1.3. Personal contributions from experience

1.3.1. What lessons have you learned about running organizations like this one?

1.3.2. What values inspire your work at this institution?

1.3.3. How would you organize (personal ideas for organization) an institution similar to this one? What changes would you make?

1.4. Relationships

1.4.1. What kind of contact do you have with the children every day?

1.4.2. How would you describe a typical day of a child here?

1.4.3. How would you describe your relationship with other members of the staff?

1.4.4. Tell me about some of the activities you engage in with outside community

Research Question 2: Based on the participants' expressed opinions, what were the organizational challenges and opportunities when setting up and now administering this institution?

2. 1. The institution

2.1.1. What can you tell me about the history of this institution? How and when was it founded?

2.1.2. What special challenges have the institution faced in these years?

2.1.3. What opportunities were there when developing this project?

2.2. Organizational problems

2.2.1. Does the legal/regulatory/enforcement framework in Mexico facilitate or impede the work of this type of institution? What has your experience been?

2.2.2. How does the institution manage budget and fund raising?

2.2.3. Has the financial crisis since 2008 affected your organization?

2.3 What other relevant organizational problems do you think are important?

Research Question 3: What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding the four selected human rights of the child (to nutrition and health care, to protection from further victimization; to free expression and participation and not to be exploited)? What are the

participants' ideas and practices regarding nutrition and health care? Treatment for previous trauma and protection from further victimization ? Free expression and participation of the children? Child responsibilities, work, and exploitation?

### 3.1. Nutrition

3.1.1. Who plans the menu every day?

3.1.2. What did the children have today for breakfast?

3.1.3. Is there a special diet given to the children? If so, what does it consist of?

3.1.4. What is your reference to determine this diet?

3.1.5. Do financial issues affect this diet?

3.1.6. Where and how do you get your food supplies?

### 3.1.2. Health care

3.1.3. What happens if a child gets sick? Do you follow a fixed procedure to treat illness?

3.1.4. Who takes care of him or her as they are convalescent?

3.1.5. Does the medical history recorded for every child include conditions that are previous to their entrance to the institution?

3.1.6. Which is your primary reference for the children's health care?

3.1.7. Where and how do you get medical services for the children? What health facilities do you have access to? Who has contact with the children from health institutions?

3.1.8. Are you able to manage regular visits to the dentist for all children?

3.1.9. Do you have enough water supply to fulfill all the hygiene needs of the children?

### 3.2. The right to be protected from further victimization

#### 3.2.1. Mental health care

3.2.1.1 What can you tell me about mental health issues among your children? How are they treated and by whom?

3.2.1.2 Do you have access to any external mental-care service, or do you have such service within the institution?

3.2.1.3 How has your service worked, especially with severely damaged children?

#### 3.2.2. Sexuality

3.2.2.1. Have you had any problems regarding sexuality?

3.2.2.2. How are sexual issues managed by the institution? (Sexual issues of children who have been abused, of issues that emerge in everyday life, prevention of abuse, etc.)

#### 3.3.3. Strategies to confront previous victimization

3.3.3.1. When children come to you from abusive situations or from being deeply neglected, can you mention some of the strategies of self-care the children bring in with them for survival?

3.3.3.2. What strategies do you use to work with these children?

#### 3.2.4 Misbehavior, confrontation

3.2.4.1. Is there any kind of punishment or consequence when someone misbehaves? What kind? Who imposes it?

3.2.4.2. How do children commonly react to this?

### 3.3. Special treatment

- 3.3.1. How are previously victimized children treated?
- 3.3.2. Do you carry any special programs for these children?

### 3.3. The right to free expression and participation

- 3.3.1. Is there a specific opportunity for children to participate in what affects them, such as an assembly or group discussion?
- 3.3.2. Is there any difference between what is offered to girls in comparison to boys?
- 3.3.3. How do you match children's development and their right to participate in decision-taking?
- 3.3.4. What specific decisions do children typically take?
- 3.3.5. Do you have some other kind of democratic practices for the children?
- 3.3.6. Are you familiar with Hart's "participation ladder"? What is your opinion about it in the context of this institution?

### 3.4. The right to not be exploited

- 3.4.1. If any of the children work, what kind of chores, do they have?
- 3.4.2. What is the participation of children in the institution's facilities?
- 3.4.3. If there is a production in these, how is the involvement of the children managed in financial terms?
- 3.4.4. In what ways do older children take responsibility for others?
- 3.4.5. What other responsibilities are given to the children?
- 3.4.6. If children earn something for their work, how are these earnings managed? How do they use their earnings?
- 3.4.7. Any other important ideas you can add from your experience on honoring the children's human rights?

Research Question 4: What characteristics can the participants of this orphanage and the researcher determine as prerequisites for efficient group care in this institution to achieve best practice?

### 4.1. About staff

- 4.1.1. What support or production facilities are there within the institution? Who is in charge of them?
- 4.1.2. What are the procedures to hire your staff and what are the requirements to work here?
- 4.1.3. Do care-givers of the children have or receive special training? If so, what does it consist of?
- 4.1.4. Do you have a volunteer-program? How is it managed?
- 4.1.5. What contact does the administrative staff have with the children?

### 4.2. About children

- 4.2.1. Are there any reasons to reject or expel a child from the orphanage?
- 4.2.2. What is the expectation for children who have been extremely maltreated or malnourished in previous years?
- 4.2.3. What practices do you carry out to enhance children's abilities and resilience?
- 4.2.4. How do you achieve discipline among the children?

- 4.2.5. What practices do you carry out to develop character in the children?
- 4.2.6. How do you facilitate communication of the children with the outside community?
- 4.2.7. What other important expectations do you have from the children for the future?
- 4.3. Requirements for best practice
- 4.3.1. In your opinion, what should the Best Practice Requirements for the management of an orphanage be?
- 4.3.2. Here is a list of requirements for best group-care as defined in research on orphanages. I would appreciate your telling me about how these are observed in this orphanage:
- A clear value system*
- A committed staff*
- A sense of predictability for all involved, including the children*
- A setting that is integrated with the community*
- A healthy influence from the peer group upon the children*
- A socially constructive engagement of children and their participation in useful activities that help develop a sense of competence and ownership, a strong character, and a unique personal identity*
- 4.4. Please express any concerns, additions or comments you would like to do about this section on what is best practice in group-care, or about the whole questionnaire.

APPENDIX D  
CODING FOR DATA ANALYSIS  
STAGES ONE, TWO AND THREE

## APPENDIX D CODING FOR DATA ANALYSIS

### CODING STAGE 1 COLOR CODES BY INSTRUMENT QUESTION

**Research question 1: How do participants of the orphanage view their work? (BLUE)**

**1.1 Previous experience.**

1.1.1 Is this your first experience with orphaned children, or with other forms of institutional care (schools, hospitals, hospices)? Please describe such previous experience.

1.1.2. How relevant was such previous experience for your work here? (INDIGO)

**1.2. Personal participation**

1.2.1. What are your current principle responsibilities/activities here?

1.2.2. What were your activities in your previous job/assignment here?

1.2.3. What kind of decisions do you routinely make in the context of your work?

1.2.4. Do you have to ask for a higher approval to take a decision? (DARK BLUE 1)

**1.3. Personal contributions from experience**

1.3.1 What lessons have you learned about running organizations like this one?

1.3.2 What values inspire your work at this institution?

1.3.3 How would you organize (personal ideas for organization) an institution similar to this one? What changes would you make? (SEA BLUE)

**1.4. Relationships**

1.4.1 What kind of contact do you have with the children every day?

1.4.2. How would you describe a typical day of a child here?

1.4.3. How would you describe your relationship with other members of the staff?

Tell me about some of the activities you engage in with outside communities. (BLUE

6)

**Research Question 2: Based on the participants' expressed opinions what were the organizational challenges and opportunities when setting up and now administering this institution? (BROWN)**

**1. The institution (LIGHT BROWN)**

2. 2.1.1. What can you tell me about the history of this institution (CHART10)? How and when was it founded?

3. 2.1.2. What special challenges have the institution faced in these years?

4. 2.1.3. What opportunities (ORANGE 1) developing this project 2.2.

**5. Organizational problems (BROWN 1)**

2.2.1. Does the legal/regulatory/enforcement framework in Mexico facilitate or impede the work of this type of institution? What has your experience been?

2.2.2. How does the institution manage budget and fund raising?

2.2.3. Has the financial crisis (MAGENTA 2) since 2008 affected your organization? 2.3 What other organizational problems are relevant. (Bureaucracy, outside criticism, relationship with other institutions, grant writing, etc.) (RED 6) that you think are important?

**Research Question 3: What are the participants' ideas and practices regarding the four selected human rights of the child (to nutrition and health care, to be protected from further victimization, to free expression and participation and to not be exploited) ? (RED - GREEN - GRAY)**

a) Nutrition (FILL CHART 4) and health care (YELLOW 1)?

**b) Treatment for previous victimization and protection from further abuse? (YELLOW 5)**

**c) Free expression and participation of the children? (CHART 2)**

**d) Child responsibilities, work, and exploitation?**

**3.1. Nutrition**

3.1.1. Who plans the menu every day?

3.1.2. What did the children have today for breakfast?

3.1.3. Is there a special diet given to the children? If so, what does it consist of?

3.1.4. What is your reference to determine this diet?

3.1.5. Do financial issues affect this diet?

3.1.6. Where and how do you get your food supplies?

**3.2. Health care**

3.2.1. What happens if a child gets sick? Do you follow a fixed procedure to treat illness?

3.2.2. Who takes care of him or her as they are convalescent?

3.2.3. How does the medical history recorded for every child include conditions that are previous to their entrance to the institution?

3.2.4. Which is your primary reference for the children's health care?

3.2.5. Where and how do you get medical services for the children? What health facilities do you have access to? Who has contact with the children from a health institutions?

3.2.6. Are you able to manage regular visits to the dentist for all children?

3.2.7. Do you have enough water supply to fulfill all the hygiene needs of the children?

**3.3. The right to be protected from further victimization**

**3.3.1. Mental health-care**

3.3.1.1. What can you tell me about mental health issues among your children? How are they treated and by whom?

3.3.1.2. Do you have access to any external mental-care service, or do you have such service within the institution?

3.3.1.3. How has your service worked, especially with severely damaged children?

**3.3.2. Sexuality**

3.3.2.1. Have you had any problems regarding sexuality?

3.3.2.2. How are sexual issues managed by the institution? (Sexual issues of children who have been abused, o issues that emerge in everyday life, prevention of abuse, etc.)

**3.3.3. Strategies to confront previous victimization**

3.3.3.1. When children come to you from abusive situations or from being deeply neglected, can you mention some of the strategies of self-care the children bring in with them for survival?

3.3.3.2. What strategies do you use to work with these children?

**3.3.3. Misbehavior, confrontation**

3.3.3.1. Is there any kind of punishment or consequence when someone misbehaves? What kind? Who imposes it?

3.3.3.2. How do children commonly react to this? (RED 5)

**3.4. Special treatment**

3.4.1. How are previously victimized children treated?

3.4.2. Do you carry any special programs for these children? (CHART 4)

**3.5. The right to free expression and participation**



3.5.1 Is there a specific opportunity for children to participate in what affects them, such as an assembly or group discussion?

3.5.2 Is there any difference between what is offered to girls (in comparison to boys)?

3.5.3 How do you match children's development and their right to participate in decision-taking?

3.5.3 What specific decisions do children typically take?

3.5.4 Do you have some other kind of democratic practices for the children?

3.5.5. Are you familiar with Hart's "participation ladder"? What is your opinion about it in the context of this institution? (LIGHT MAGENTA)

### 3.6. Right to not be exploited

3.6.1. If any of the children work, what kind of chores, do they have?

3.6.2. What is the participation of children in the institution's facilities?

3.6.3. If there is a production in these, how is the involvement of the children managed in financial terms?

3.6.4. In what ways do older children take responsibility for others?

3.6.5. What other responsibilities are given to the children?

3.6.6. If children earn something for their work, how are these earnings managed? How do they use their earnings? (GRAY 10%)

3.7. Any other important ideas you can add from your experience on honoring the children's human rights?

**Research Question 4: What characteristics can the participants of this orphanage and the researcher determine as prerequisites for efficient group care (PEGC) in this institution to achieve best practice? (PINK AND BLUE FILLS)**

4.1. About staff

4.1.1. What support or production facilities are there within the institution? Who is in charge of them?

4.1.2. What are the procedures to hire your staff and what are the requirements to work here?

4.1.3. Do care-givers of the children have or receive special training? If so, what does it consist of?

4.1.4 Do you have a volunteer-program? How is it managed?

4.1.5 What contact does the administrative staff have with the children? (MAGENTA FILL)

About children 4.2.1. Are there any reasons to reject or expel a child from the orphanage)?

4.2.2 What is the expectation for children who have been extremely maltreated or malnourished in previous years?

4.2.3 What specific practices do you carry out to enhance children's abilities and resilience? 4.2.4 How do you achieve discipline among the children?

4.2.5 What practices do you carry out to develop character in the children?

4.2.6 How do you facilitate communication of the children with the outside community? 4.2.7 What other important expectations do you have from the children for the future? (BLUE FILL)

### 4.3 Requirements for best practice

4.3.1. In your opinion, what should the Best Practice Requirements for the management of an orphanage be?

4.3.2. Here is a list of requirements for best group-care as defined in research on orphanages, I would appreciate your telling me about how these are observed in this orphanage:

\* A clear value system: **(TURQUOISE FILL)**

\* A committed staff: **(CREAM FILL)**

\* A sense of predictability for all involved, including the children **(RED PRINT; GREEN FILL):**

\* A setting that is integrated with the community: **(PINK FILL)**

\* A healthy influence from the peer group upon the children, **(LIGHT PURPLE FILL)**

\* A socially constructive engagement of children and their participation in useful activities that help develop a sense of competence and ownership, a strong character, and a unique personal identity A clear value system **(ORANGE-YELLOW FILL).**

4.4. Please express any concerns, additions or comments you would like to do about this section on what is best practice in group-care, or about the whole questionnaire. **(YELLOW FILL)**

CODING FOR DATA ANALYSIS  
STAGE 2  
TRANSCRIPTION OF RESPONSES AND SEARCH OF GENERAL THEMES

EXAMPLE 1

3.5. The right to free expression :

**Interview number and text:**

**A. (Manager)** At first we have them a lot because the children used to have problems all the time, they were in constant conflict. Now they are not as often, now we usually if there is a problem we bring all the kids together and we call for a meeting to resolve things. Before we were having classes with them like every single day just about like about values and different things but then it started getting like too much for them and weren't looking forward to it any more so we thought it was like counter productive, so we stopped that but we do have...  
I.Q. Was that about once a week or how often  
K: (A child brings a piece of glass found in the sand) Oh! This is dangerous. I.Q. Its very good that he brought it!  
Yeah and we are starting to have

One practice is that they don't allow them to feel sorry for themselves, or any other people to feel sorry for then and fostering the idea that they are responsible for their own live and they ultimately are the ones to choose what will happen with their lives.

**C: (Staff)** I.Q. has asked us to report on specific issues like if there is sexual activities between children.

**D: (Staff)**  
I.Q: There is this issue (I just show her the written word in my questionnaire: "Sexuality". Since there are small children present I ask "D" if she wants to talk about it now or if she rather leave it for another moment)  
Maybe you should talk to "A" about that, because she has been in contact with the older kids. more than I do.

kids...I would like to take care of this group of kids on Saturday" And that has actually happened in the past, but then they get you know, tired of it and say and "I don't want to do that an more I rather do something else."

**E: (Staff)**

**F: (Staff)** Yes, in the labor chairs, there is a little gender. Boys more outdoors and girls more helping to clean. Everyone has to have their place clean and in order. The kind of chair is somehow different. Older boys go to soccer. An girls have chase de la tria. One of the older girls. Even designed a coreography.

The older they get the more decisions they can take and they are more independent. Teens can go out more than small children.

In other practices: In school in the garden to choose of they wanted to work in the garden. In school we agreed by consensus about an activity or their opinion for a festival or is the balls were broken what solutions they would give cooperate with money to buy new ones. There were workshops like meditation or music.

Three or four times a week there was a special activity to receive the children, and we kept this even when the director of the school was not

TRANSCRIPTION OF RESPONSES...  
EXAMPLE 2

1.3. PERSONAL CONTRIBUT	
Interview number and text:	
<p><b>A. (Manager)</b></p> <p>A. 1 (by reference: Mother of manager) So the training comes from A.1? (D. STAFF) Exactly, and from a lot of experience... A lot of experience. It has been a process where we see they need to have the right treatment and a lot of experience, a lot of experience. A lot of them have the same issues so its similar. Its been a process but they definitely need to have the right treatment and they ??? stability on life and also there is an academic side to it which is that a lot of times they've missed many years for many years so that is the problem.</p> <p><b>B: (Staff)</b></p> <p>C: (Staff) For our orphanage I think a big big thing is that we help each other to become better people so the quality of what we can give the kids is better all the time. We always have really proper relationships with each other and we know each other in what we are missing someone else may be stronger so we are constantly... We are aware of our lacks as an orphanage and as individuals so we may not be able to be at the level where we</p>	<p>very expressive, they kind of always OK...</p> <p>LQ And what strategies do you use to work with these children? If they do these things, if they are crying... (Interruption because a child is showing her a toy, saying "I mine") "Hey pap!... Would you like to use this? (Comments on the child.)</p> <p>Its different for every kid. I think the most important thing that all of us are learning is that there is no one treatment that works for every kid, you have to be able to feel the essence of the kid, understand who they are, understand what their issue is in life and then treat that and then deal with it you know?</p> <p><b>D: (Staff)</b></p> <p>The main thing is to get them into a stable loving environment where they know they have a really secure home and from there they can start to heal. You cannot really start to work on their problems until they feel secure. When they feel loved and they know they have a home and that they are taken care of and that it is going to be Ok and then they can start to be treated.</p> <p>Definitively, this is like a step one and then you can do everything, and really it is the parent of the child who gets the closest to the child and they are like their main therapist.</p> <p>Therapists come here. It is not a person who lives here but</p>
<p>that way of living. If they are all healthy I work with pre-schoolers and babies.</p> <p><b>C. (Staff)</b> I work as a teacher of the children who cannot attend the regular school. A.1 (Manager's mother) guides us all in our paths. She has the experience and knowledge. We all have contact with the children because it is part of our work and to become a better person, because you are more sensitive to understand the kid's reactions. You must have other activities. Our priority is to know how to educate children.</p> <p><b>Dora. (Staff)</b> I design the menus and I am in charge of most issues to do with public relations. I answer emails and attend people who come for different searches.</p> <p><b>Eloy. (Staff)</b></p> <p>I have been a part of the organization since 2007, and a full-time staff member since 2009, and is currently in charge of our agriculture and self-sufficiency projects. I am also in charge of our "boy house" that currently has six boys ages 5 to 14.</p> <p>Yes, you could say I am a fatherly figure for the children.</p> <p><b>F. (Staff)</b> At first I did not participate, but helping with</p>	<p><b>E: (Staff)</b></p> <p>Takes care of the boy's house</p> <p><b>F: (Staff)</b></p> <p>Focusing more in the school, I would say one should get better founding for mid and long term projects.</p> <p>James "boy house"</p>



CODING FOR DATA ANALYSIS  
STAGE 3  
EXAMPLES OF MANUAL SEARCH FOR THEMES  
EXAMPLE 1

1.1. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE			
Interview number and text:	Weight	<i>ANALYSIS on: Previous experience or training to work in orphanage: (INDIGO)</i>	
	Academic Credentials		
	to work in Orphanage		
	Spiritual search		
	nutritional knowledge		
	practicing		
	'came from attending		
<b>A.(Manager)</b>	5		
I was born in 19	5		
moved to Mexico with i	10		
when I was 2 years old. Since I was	10		
little, always lead a very free life. I			
received my teacher			
Certification at age 15, finished up			
my home-based high school			
education a year early at age 17, and			
joined a theater group in Mexico			
that same year. By age 18, I found			
myself briefly in the ow			
living with my boyfriend (B) and			
studying Art. <u>The more I traveled</u>			
<u>and the more people I met, the</u>			
<u>more I realized how much I</u>			
<u>appreciated the people in our</u>			
<u>organization, and the life</u>			
<u>philosophy everyone lived there.</u> I			
also realized how much P			
appreciated living in a community			
surrounded by people who share the			
same ideals. Later that same year I			
returned to our organization in			
Mexico as a full-time staff member.			
		<p>The manager is following her mother's projects. Her mother, who is the founder never gave me an interview.</p> <p>Her credentials are on " " and correct individualized nutrition. " " pathy. No training in education or psychology.</p> <p>" " her for " " (ere?)</p> <p>This is "her home" and always has been. Spiritual philosophy is what is mostly appreciated.</p> <p>A a " " e their child growing up here. "B" also had her son growing up in this orphanage. (He is now a yo doing college in a large city.) This shows coherence in the attitude of having orphaned or abandoned children as "family".</p> <p>The view of the manager is that what is most important is to have nutritional knowlegde</p>	

# MANUAL SEARCH FOR THEMES

## EXAMPLE 2

1.4. Relationships	Weight	ANALYSIS on Relationships:
Interview number and text:	spiritual philosophy	
	respect	
	Family emotional bondage	
	communication	
<p><i>View: Keep family together (Kenny)</i></p> <p><b>A. (Manager)</b> We received a family of five children about five years ago. At the beginning we thought we could not receive them, but they told us that otherwise they would be separated from each other and sent to different orphanages. The oldest were a girl of 13 and a boy of 12, then there was a girl of 9, and then two other girls, the youngest just 2 and a half years old.</p>	<p><i>Obj 1</i> <i>Obj 2</i> <i>Obj 4 (participation)</i></p> <p>9 9 Consequence, discipline respect?</p>	<p>In this discourse one great involvement and commitment with the children's problems and condition is addressed. The relationship with them implies preserving them from further dramatic issues.</p>
<p>The 9 year old actually co-sleep with another two girls. We decided that if they did not want to be here we would just forget about them, because we could not deal with having to go after children who didn't really wanted to be with us.</p>		<p>In this paragraph there is an act of extreme discipline that allows others to take definitive decisions about staying or leaving the orphanage. This implies freedom of decision, however this freedom could be under the "what-situation-is-worse" question.</p>
<p>The same day, the girls were found through the DIF, and we accepted the 9 year old girl back but none of her siblings were here, but not the other two girls. When we received these five siblings, we asked the people from DIF if they were sure they would not return to their families. They said they wouldn't, but after a while their mother did come to the DIF, and tried to get them.</p>	<p><i>Challenge: 5 children were returned to mother</i></p>	<p>In other paragraphs (we find the word "freedom" or the lack of obligation to stay the lack of doors or confinement.</p> <p>The attachment between the children is described by the meaning of instability when authorities of the "DIF" national welfare do not follow the rules of not sending children permanently to the orphanage.</p>



1.1. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE		Obj 1	Obj 2
<b>Interview number and text:</b>	<b>Weight</b> <b>Academic Credentials</b> <b>to work in Orphanage</b> <b>Spiritual search</b> <b>nutritional knowledge</b> <b>practicing</b> <b>came from attending</b>	<b>ANALYSIS on: Previous experience or training to work in orphanage: (INDIGO)</b>	
<b>A.(Manager)</b> I was born in 19... moved to Mexico with... when I was 2 years old. Since I was little, always lead a very free life. I received my... teacher Certification at age 15, finished up my home-based high school education a year early at age 17, and joined a theater group in Mexico that same year. By age 18, I found myself briefly in the... low living with my boyfriend (5) and studying Art. <u>The more I traveled and the more people I met, the more I realized how much I appreciated the people in our organization, and the life philosophy everyone lived there.</u> I also realized how much P appreciated living in a community surrounded by people who share the same ideals. Later that same year I returned to our organization in Mexico as a full-time staff member.	5 5 10 10 Brn	The manager is following her mother's projects. Her mother, who is the founder never gave me an interview.  Her credentials are on... ing and correct individualized nutrition. ... pathy. No training in education or psychology. I her for... (ere?)  This is "her home" and always has been. Spiritual philosophy is what is mostly appreciated.  A a... e their child growing up here. "B" also had her son growing up in this orphanage. (He is now a yo doing college in a large city.) This shows coherence in the attitude of having orphaned or abandoned children as "family".  <u>The view of the manager is that what is most important is to have nutritional knowledge</u>	

## EXAMPLE OF COLOR CODING FOR ELOY'S RESPONSES

3. Severely damaged children? I think its been **good**. To be honest we really focus on the kids as when they come we treat them as if it is day 1 in their **new life**. They have a **new life**. They receive a lot of **love**. Proper **nutrition**. They have very full **lives**. School is really important. And I feel that a combination of their life style here and whatever the psychologist has been doing has worked **extremely well**. Especially we get the kids in a certain state and **usually within 6 month, there is dramatic change, one year even more so** and after two years they are totally different kids. Most of the time they **don't resemble** or like refer to their past and they just have like a **new life** here and they are really really happy kids. They have very **full lives**. They just have a like a very **new life** here. *obscure nutrition - weight 9*  
*dramatic change*

4 Strategies of self care? I honestly I remember the kids coming in and of course when we are taking them into our homes in we know the situation they come from... but there wasn't anything recognizable like to can say "this is how they know to cope". We have kids that come off the street and when we have...and as people come to visit and hang out with the kids or whatever they are doing they might still have like **begging tendencies**. Usually, that stuff within 6 months its just not there any more that's just more that's just more of ....a day to day survival mechanism that's been engrained with them for many many years but emotionally I think just see a house with kids, with **happy** kids and a new life. SO they tend to forget all the past its a day to day **survival** mechanism Thats the only thing that I've experienced. *no previous app to "requisite" how they cope*

5 We use the same strategies for all kids really. Because there is, I guess across the board there's the kids that are sent to the State DIF orphanage system have been **neglected or abused, abandoned** that's why they are here in the first place. **Abandoned**. We treat all the kids the same, we just give them lot of **love** lots of support, really really help them with school. Most of the time they come severely academically behind. We have **normal** thirteen, fourteen-year-olds that at a Kinder Garden or first grade academic level. Because they never went to school **lived in the streets** or whatever. And so...Lots of **love** and lots of **attention** and that's pretty much it. And it works... the kids are **happy**, more sensitive to their situation. We explain to them. And just say listen, you know, you gonna be fine You didn't go to school for a bunch of years. and by the time when you guys are adults you will all be at the same level. You are just going to work hard these next couple of years and you'll be able to catch up. Emotionally and psychologically this works for the kids. *amongst some do?*  
*a lot of hesitation*

6. Regarding sexuality (slow). Amongst the kids no... Regarding sexuality...am Na... ah... I mean I have teen/age boys. They ask a lot of questions about like dating and girls and, I mean everything feels **very very normal** and very teenage. So we haven't had any problems with the kids regarding that. I think like you are going from the 13 to 16 years. I have boys in my house. So...ah, you know They ask question about **certain things**. You know of people from the community some kids that have gone to our from the community *very normal*  
*Tabi*

5 of 11



APPENDIX E  
INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

**1. Informed consent form in Spanish language:**

**CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO de la directora para participar en la Investigación:  
“El cumplimiento de cuatro Derechos Humanos de la Infancia vistos a través de la  
organización de una casa-hogar: Estudio de un caso en México”**

Estimada(o) \_\_\_\_\_

Directora general de (*Orphanage name*)

Mi nombre es Lucía Beatriz Quesnel Galván. Soy profesora jubilada en el estado de Oaxaca. Fui directora de una subsección de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional y di clase también en la Unidad de la ciudad de Oaxaca a profesores Indígenas. Después de jubilada he tenido la oportunidad de hacer estudios de doctorado en Educación en la Universidad Estatal de Portland, Oregon, Estados Unidos. Para mi tesis de doctorado estoy iniciando un estudio de caso acerca de las estrategias que una casa-hogar como la suya utiliza para cumplir cuatro derechos humanos básicos de la infancia (DHI) (establecidos en la Convención Internacional de las Naciones Unidas en 1990) en estos tiempos tan difíciles. Mis objetivos son: comprender los problemas que han tenido para satisfacer estos DHI, y para organizar su institución; establecer, junto con ustedes, los requisitos para que un servicio como el de ésta institución se lleve a cabo de la mejor manera posible. Cuando me enteré acerca de su organización me pareció un lugar privilegiado para mi estudio. Quiero además aprender acerca de su experiencia para poder, en un futuro próximo, colaborar con ustedes o con una institución como ésta.

Mi metodología consiste en hacer una entrevista a profundidad con usted y con al menos a cuatro integrantes del personal. Por consideración a las necesidades y especial sensibilidad de los niños y niñas bajo su cuidado, no les haré ninguna clase de preguntas a ellos.

Tomando en cuenta sus múltiples ocupaciones me atenderé a los días y horarios que usted disponga para llevar a cabo la entrevista, la cual puede ser dividida en cuatro partes. Toda aquella persona que participe en esta investigación debe estar completamente de acuerdo y no debe ser obligado de ninguna manera.

Los posibles beneficios para (*Orphanage name*) incluyen que la casa-hogar puede hacer mejoras que ustedes mismos sugieran a partir de nuestras pláticas. Otro beneficio podría ser que todos los que participen en este trabajo se den a conocer como co-autores de una publicación que podrá servir a otros orfanatos o casas-hogar y a los niños y niñas con quienes trabajan. Además, los resultados de esta investigación contribuirán a la muy escasa literatura acerca de las instituciones que ofrecen estos servicios en México.

En caso de publicación sólo con la firma de los participantes podría revelar los datos obtenidos ligados a sus identidades y la de su institución. También debo aclarar que su participación es voluntaria y no significa ningún otro compromiso. Yo se la agradezco porque me parece que su organización es muy apropiada para este trabajo.

Esta no es una investigación legal ni periodística o algo por el estilo. Sin embargo, es importante aclarar que de acuerdo con las leyes estadounidenses sobre investigación académica y con la ley que protege a la infancia en nuestro país, evidentemente debo reportar cualquier actividad ilícita. También estoy obligada, por ética profesional y también por la ley de Estados Unidos, a guardar

Confidencialmente las identidades de todas las personas involucradas en mi estudio. En caso de publicación sólo con la firma de los participantes, podría revelar los datos obtenidos ligados a las identidades de las personas entrevistadas o de su institución. Reitero que su participación es voluntaria y no implica ningún otro compromiso. Yo les agradezco su anuencia porque su organización es muy apropiada para este trabajo.

Si tiene dudas acerca de su participación en este estudio o acerca de sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, por favor contacte al Comité de Supervisión Sobre Sujetos Humanos de Investigación, Oficina de Investigación y Proyectos Patrocinados, en el Edificio Unitus 600 en Portland State University, al teléfono 001 (503) 725-4288 ó 1-877-480-4400. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio en sí mismo contacte a la investigadora, Mtra. Lucía Quesnel en 544 Stanton Street, Arroyo Grande Ca., c.p. 93420 al teléfono 01(805)4741316. O en Mexico: Ocelotzin 16-27, San Pedro, Tepoztlán, Morelos, c.p. 62520 tel. 777283331. Para que mi proyecto sea aprobado en la Universidad Estatal de Portland necesito la firma de todos los participantes.

Atentamente,

---

Lucia B. Quesnel Galván

Si da su consentimiento para que se lleve a cabo esta investigación en (*Orphanage name*) por favor firme aquí:

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Firma \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Informed consent from manager as subject in the following research project:  
“The fulfillment of four basic human rights of children seen through the organization of  
their orphanage: a case in Mexico.”**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_  
General Manager of (*Orphanage name*)

My name is Lucia Beatriz Quesnel Galvan. I am a retired professor of education from the State of Oaxaca. I was head of the National Pedagogical University subunit in Teotitlán de Flores Magón, Oax. I also taught Indigenous teachers at the unit in Oaxaca City. After retiring I had the opportunity of entering the graduate studies program in Education at Portland State University in Oregon, USA. For my dissertation, I am doing a case-study research on the strategies that an orphanage like yours uses to fulfill four basic Human Rights of the Children (HRC) (of the United Nation's Convention of 1990). My objectives are to understand the problems that you have had to satisfy these HRC in these difficult times, to organize your institution and, together with you, establish the requirements for a child-care institution like this one to be efficient and achieve best practice. When I found out about your organization it seemed like a privileged site for this study. In addition, I would like to learn about your work because in the near future I would like to collaborate with this or another institution of this kind.

My methodology consists of achieving a deep interview with you and with at least four members of the staff. Considering the sensitivity of the children at your care I will not ask any questions to them. I know you are extremely busy so I will submit to the schedule and moment that you prefer. The interview can be divided in 4 parts. All participants should be in agreement and should not be obliged in any way.

This is not a legal or journalistic investigation or anything of the sort. However, according to the law of the United States on academic research I am obliged to report any illicit activity if such was found.

By professional ethics, and also by the law in the United States I am obliged to keep as confidential the identities of all the participants in my study. In case of being published only under the signature of participants could data linked to their identity and institution be revealed. I must also clarify that your participation is voluntary and does not imply any other commitment. I am grateful for it because I find your organization as very appropriate for this study. If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 600 Unitus Bldg., Portland State University, (503) 725-4288 / 1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact Lucía Quesnel at 544 Stanton Street, Arroyo Grande Ca., c.p. 93420. In Mexico at Ocelotzin 16-27, San Pedro, Tepoztlán, Mor.c.p. 62520 MorMORMorelos,c.p. 62520 tel. 777283331.

Phone number: 7772803331

For my project to be approved in Portland State University I need the signature of all those who will participate. If you agree to grant me an interview, please write your name and signature here:

Sincerely,

---

Lucia B Quesnel Galván

If you give your approval for this research in (Orphanage name) please sign here:

Name\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Informed consent in form the staff in Spanish language.

#### CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO para participar en la Investigación:

#### “El cumplimiento de cuatro Derechos Humanos de la Infancia vistos a través de la organización de una casa-hogar: Estudio de un caso en México”

Estimada(o) \_\_\_\_\_

Puesto o responsabilidad en (*Orphanage name*) \_\_\_\_\_

Mi nombre es Lucía Beatriz Quesnel Galván. Soy profesora jubilada en el estado de Oaxaca. Fui directora de una subse de la Universidad Pedagógica Nacional y di clase también en la Unidad de la ciudad de Oaxaca a profesores Indígenas. Después de jubilada he tenido la oportunidad de hacer estudios de doctorado en Educación en la Universidad Estatal de Portland, Oregon, Estados Unidos. Para mi tesis de doctorado estoy iniciando un estudio de caso acerca de las estrategias que una casa-hogar como la suya utiliza para cumplir cuatro derechos humanos básicos de la infancia (DHI) (establecidos en la Convención Internacional de las Naciones Unidas en 1990) en estos tiempos tan difíciles. Mis objetivos son: comprender los problemas que han tenido para satisfacer estos DHI, y para organizar su institución; establecer, junto con ustedes, los requisitos para que un servicio como el de ésta institución se lleve a cabo de la mejor manera posible. Cuando me enteré acerca de su organización me pareció un lugar privilegiado para mi estudio. Quiero además aprender acerca de su experiencia para poder, en un futuro próximo, colaborar con ustedes o con una institución como ésta.

Mi metodología consiste en hacer una entrevista a profundidad con la directora y con al menos a cuatro integrantes del personal. Por consideración a las necesidades y especial sensibilidad de estos niños, no les haré ninguna clase de preguntas a ellos.

Tomando en cuenta sus múltiples ocupaciones me atenderé a los días y horarios que usted disponga para llevar a cabo la entrevista, la cual puede ser dividida en cuatro partes. Toda aquella persona que participe en esta investigación debe estar completamente de acuerdo y no debe ser obligatorio en ningún momento.

Los posibles beneficios para (*Orphanage name*) incluyen que la casa-hogar puede hacer mejoras que ustedes mismos sugieran a partir de nuestras pláticas. Otro beneficio podría ser que todos los que participen en este trabajo se den a conocer como co-autores de una publicación que podrá servir a otros orfanatorios o casas-hogar y a los niños y niñas con quienes trabajan. Además, los resultados de esta investigación contribuirán a la muy escasa literatura acerca de las instituciones que ofrecen estos servicios en México.

Esta no es una investigación legal ni periodística o algo por el estilo. Sin embargo, es importante aclarar que de acuerdo con las leyes estadounidenses sobre investigación académica y con la ley que protege a la infancia en nuestro país, evidentemente debo reportar cualquier actividad ilícita. También estoy obligada, por ética profesional y también por la ley de Estados Unidos, a guardar confidencialmente las identidades de todas las personas involucradas en mi estudio. En caso de publicación sólo con la firma de los participantes, podría revelar los datos obtenidos ligados a las

identidades de las personas entrevistadas o de su institución. Reitero que su participación es voluntaria y no implica ningún otro compromiso. Yo les agradezco su anuencia porque su organización es muy apropiada para este trabajo.

Si tiene dudas acerca de su participación en este estudio o acerca de sus derechos como sujeto de investigación, por favor contacte al Comité de Supervisión Sobre Sujetos Humanos de Investigación, Oficina de Investigación y Proyectos Patrocinados, en el Edificio Unitus 600 en Portland State University, al teléfono 001 (503) 725-4288 ó 1-877-480-4400. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio en sí mismo contacte a la investigadora, Mtra. Lucía B. Quesnel Galván en 544 Stanton Street, Arroyo Grande Ca., 93420 al teléfono 01(805)4741316. O en Mexico: Ocelotzin 16-27, San Pedro, Tepoztlán , Morelos, c.p. 62520 tel. 777283331. Para que mi proyecto sea aprobado en la Universidad Estatal de Portland necesito la firma de todos los participantes.

Atentamente,

---

Lucia B. Quesnel Galván

Si está de acuerdo en participar en este estudio por favor firme aquí:

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_ Firma: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Informed consent from the staff in English language:

**INFORMED CONSENT from staff to participate as subject in the following research project:**

**“The fulfillment of four basic human rights of children seen through the organization of their orphanage: a case in Mexico.”**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Position, responsibility in (*Orphanage name*): \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Lucia Beatriz Quesnel Galvan. I am a retired professor of education from the State of Oaxaca. I was head of the National Pedagogical University subunit in Teotitlán de Flores Magón, Oax. I also taught Indigenous teachers at the unit in Oaxaca City. After retiring I had the opportunity of entering the graduate studies program in Education at Portland State University in Oregon, USA. For my dissertation, I am doing a case-study research on the strategies that an orphanage like yours uses to fulfill four basic Human Rights of the Children (HRC) (of the United Nation's Convention of 1990). My objectives are to understand the problems that you have had to satisfy these HRC in these difficult times, to organize your institution and, together with you, establish the requirements for a child-care institution like this one to be efficient and achieve best practice. When I found out about your organization it seemed like a privileged site for this study. In addition, I would like to learn about your work because in the near future I would like to collaborate with this or another institution of this kind.

My methodology consists of achieving a deep interview with the manager of the orphanage and with at least four members of the staff. Considering the sensitivity of the children at your care I will not ask any questions to them. I know you are extremely busy so I will submit to the schedule and moment that you prefer. The interview can be divided in 4 parts. All participants should be in agreement and should not be obliged in any way.

This is not a legal or journalistic investigation or anything of the sort. However, according to the law of the United States on academic research I am obliged to report any illicit activity if such was found.

By professional ethics, and also by the law in the United States I am obliged to keep as confidential the identities of all the participants in my study. In case of being published only under the signature of participants could data linked to their identity and institution be revealed.

I must also clarify that your participation is voluntary and does not imply any other commitment. I am grateful for it because I find your organization as very appropriate for this study. If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 600 Unitus Bldg., Portland State University, (503) 725-4288 / 1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact Lucía B. Quesnel Galván at 544



Stanton Street, Arroyo Grande Ca., 93420. Or in Mexico at Ocelotzin 16-27, San Pedro, Tepoztlán , Morelos, c.p. 62520 tel. 777283331.

For my project to be approved in Portland State University I need the signature of all those who will participate. If you agree to grant me an interview, please write your name and signature here:

Sincerely,

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Lucia B Quesnel Galván

If you agree to participate in this research please sign here:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_